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MASTERS, EDGAR LEE. Gettysburg, Manila, Acoma. ltd ed 219p $10 Liveright

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"The volume contains three plays in verse, the form being more or less loosely patterned after that of the Greek tragedies. Stated baldly, the argument of the first play is Booth's assassination of Lincoln, represented as the last stand of American liberty against the tide of plutocracy; of the second, the downfall of Philippine liberty before American imperialism; of the third, the unavailing efforts of our southwestern Indians to keep their worship of the sun, to live their life by their own lights." —N Y Evening Post

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"The intention behind these three dramas in verse is so vigorous, the condemnation of evil so strong, the love of the good life so manifest, one is loath to make any wholesale condemnation because the poetry itself too rarely measures up to the conception. It must be admitted, however, that the poetry nowhere is sustained. The last of the three dramas, 'Acoma,' is easily the best, and the lyrics throughout are considerably better than the recitative passages in blank verse, which are pretty turgid and dull." Edwin Seaver

— + **N Y Evening Post** p5s Jl 12 '30 350w

"These three pieces by Edgar Lee Masters are, to our thinking, significant in American poetry, not only for themselves, but for the vistas they suggest. We trust not only that Mr. Masters will continue along this path but also that he will have followers. But we should like to see the intellectuality of the work more artfully concealed. And especially we should like to see more full-bodied characters. Mr. Masters's dramatis personae are too often mere voices and too seldom living people." P. H.

+ — **N Y Times** p10 Jl 27 '30 800w

This edition of Gettysburg, Manila, Ácoma consists of 375 numbered copies, of which 350 are for sale. Each copy is signed by the author. The book is designed by Werner Helmer and printed at The Van Rees Press from type which was distributed after printing.

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Edgar Lee Masters

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GETTYSBURG

MANILA

ÁCOMA

GETTYSBVRG
MANILA
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BY Edgar Lee Masters

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New York
HORACE LIVERIGHT·1930

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GETTYSBVRG

Gettysburg

Characters
OF THE POEM

Booth	A Strange Man
Payne	Nancy
Atzerodt	Herold
O'Laughlin	Federal Soldiers

THE *scene represents the alley back of Ford's Theatre in Washington. The great rear wall of the theatre looms blankly, broken by a few half-lighted windows, and by the stage entrance door, and a larger door to the left of it, which is closed. The smaller door is half open. There are buildings and spaces at either side of the theatre wall. It is a dark night of driving clouds; but the sky and the surroundings of the*

wall are lighted by the reflection of lamps and torches, the latter borne by celebrants of the War's end. The city is noisy with the sound of playing bands, with singing voices, and with the shouts of troops who are marching in Pennsylvania Avenue and everywhere, including the street in front of the theatre. Five days before this Lee has surrendered; and on this day of April 14th the Federal flag has been raised over Fort Sumter.

Booth sits on a bench near the stage door, just under the half light of the windows. His head is bowed in thought. The solemn chant of innumerable voices sounds over the city.

VOICES

For the foe fallen rejoice
With drum, with horn, with voice,
With the tramp of armies and the flame of rockets.
Four years of war to us have given
The victory, and be heaven
Praised for the issue, with all lips made dumb to mock its
Justice which on the Law first born is founded.
But above all be ever spoken praise
For him whom neither censorious days,
Nor envy, enemies, nor defeat confounded;
Who of the people born,
A people's trial has worn,
The woodsman by us lifted to the fasces;
Who called us from the toil,
Of the mine, the quarry, soil
For Round Top, Shiloh, and the mountain passes.

Now enter here
This grief diverting theatre;
Be at peace with the land at last in happy peace.
Think of the enduring rhyme
To lift him for all time;
Think of the years to be of high acclaim and ease,
We the invincible army he invoked
Stand guard to honor him and defend;
Stand firm to execute what the laws intend
For States whose treason is uncloaked.

BOOTH

O God! Why was I ever born to cure
  This great injustice?
Why chosen to right it, while I must endure
  What my mistrust is?
Has this war maddened me, as all,
  Him and his armies it maddened,
So that I drink this wormwood mixed with gall
  With a spirit gladdened?

SOLDIERS

And we'll all drink blind drunk
When Johnny comes marching home...
When Johnny comes marching home!

BOOTH

O God in heaven, on my people's woe
  Look down with pity;
Upon our dead, the fruits of this hated foe;
  Upon my city

Richmond in flames, and on the fair estates
In desolation;
Have mercy on the broken pride, the gates
Of a ruined nation.

SOLDIERS

We're leaving Father Abraham, more than a million strong;
We're going back to the plow and shop which we have left so long.

BOOTH

While on the mountain's top volcanic strife
Piled up the boulders;
Far down a crawling insect traced its life
For all beholders,
In sea silt by an unregarded strand,
Which the years made granite:
Which reveals the era, or how heaven's hand
Dreamed and began it?

VOICES

O Age of Steel, in our land now draw
Harp strings from the iron bars of the mills,
And from our slaughters sweeter viol strings.

BOOTH

I am in the clutch of the double tongued powers,
Which affirm and deny.
I am storm driven by momentous music:

Gettysburg

The growling thunder of viols,
And the tragedy of wailing flutes
Move amid the sun-lit tangle of strings,
And blind with ecstasy.
Deep horns blow their imponderable message
Around my tossed and bewildered thought;
And tremulous ecstasies whisper like zephyrs at my ear.
The plucked strings of advancing fate
Break the persistence of the bassoons.
The far horns call me: Press onward,
Press onward! And following these
Such melodies as are the memory of love,
Which bring again the vision of women's hands,
And the gaze of adoring eyes.
Death, being twin of love, they summon up
The hidden meaning of bronze masks,
Moulded out of the silence of the sealed life,
And unutterable mysteries
Of all verse, all color, all unacted sublimity.
Now the deep woe of the world and man's life flow
through me.
I have stepped from the edge of Time, and stand on space,
Buoyed by the eternal nature of my being.
What is good, what is evil
Here where I stand? There is none! All is nothing!
There is none save it be evil or good to me.
But between this edge, and this inane I think.
If life be good, and a fiend destroy life
Shall I not destroy the destroyer? Destroy him
From this inaccessible spot beyond Time

Where I float in supernal power!
But meanwhile there is the flesh of me which thirsts
for water;
There is fear for this, the beautiful body of my youth,
This white throat of the golden voice
Which rope can still, and lime can eat away!
There is this vigil here upon this bench
Waiting the hour, and remembering the love
Of women, whom I have put by for this deed.
I have forsaken desire which gazed upon me from afar,
And which stood in rapture at the touch of my hand —
All put by in this the blossom of my genius,
I a son of Shakespeare, for this act
Of Banquo's murderers. Be it Brutus!
My mother forgotten, too! Let me not think of her!

SOLDIERS

The land is ours and the Charleston port,
And Moultrie and Pickens too.
O, Say can you see on Sumter's fort
The old Red, White, and Blue?
Where first the treasonous shot was fired
The last of the Johnnies is dead or tired,
And we'll all drink blind drunk
As we go marching home,
When we are safe at home!

BOOTH

How much longer must I hear this vile farrago
Which breaks upon my orchestrated dreams

Of my lovers, my adorers far and near?
But chiefly where the white-pillared cities
Bedeck beloved Virginia, and where old mansions
Stand amid the sensuous sorcery
Of passionate mimosa and dagger blossoms?
How much longer must the memory of my mother,
Who taught me freedom, truth and righteousness,
Be made a discord? My mother now become
The half voluptuous face of my adorable South,
Which I love as I love woman! My mother dishonored
By the murderer, the thief, the rapist
Who befouled and widowed the women of the South!
These pure feelings,
These moods of rapt survey, of holiest courage,
How shall they still be shattered as a wind rifted cloud,
And sent adrift in writhing darkness
By this dull, murderous measure
Of soldiers' feet who have trampled my land?
How much longer shall I hear
The barbarous blare of horns, and the rataplan of
demonic drums
Which erode the granite of my uplifted will,
And channel it for the serpentine return
Of dark, cold, infinite water? Faithless fear!
What voice shall I heed? That which is myself
Jailed as a coward felon in this cell,
Which is this insect skull in darkness
Of the shadows of doubt, where the vacillating eye
Sees nothing true? Or shall I heed
That Will which is the breath of God himself,

Breathing upon me as a wind out of the South,
Laden with the smoke of burning cities, and the smell
Of rotting flesh of our boys in the Wilderness?
Is it a wrong to kill him? Will the hand
Of history weave it a wrong, that hand whose fingers
Ravel, re-weave, wash out and dye again,
With the aid of collective wisdom, until the deed
Stands not, seen this way, as but clots of blood,
Then this way as a stain, but is at last,
Viewed with the final eyes, bright color woven
In the tapestry of Time! Here on this bench
I sit amid the trifles of an hour:
Clouds, marching men, all casual things which make
The moments into a logic of consequence.
Let them but aggregate to hours, to days,
To years hereafter out of this little womb,
Then they become a destiny matured
Fated to be, nor otherwise to be,
And therefore right. Whence follows it my act
Cannot go wrong.

(*Enter the strange man from the stage door.*)

MAN

You here? I was in wonder how to send
The final word. All's now in readiness.
Your scantlin lies along the eastern wall
Of the corridor to the box where he will sit,
The shadows hide it. No one yet has spied
The notch you cut to hold the scantlin's end,
Nor how its other end fits in the grille.

And that hole which you cut in the box's door
Is undiscovered yet. But where's your men?

BOOTH

I'd like to know myself. But you miscall them;
They are not men, and that's the danger now.
Herold is but a poor, weak, timorous boy
Of twenty-two, with just a child's mind, so
I take him for my guide, since he knows all
The roads, and is a horseman. Atzerodt
Is a coward. O'Laughlin —

MAN

He has failed for this:
Grant left the city.

BOOTH

So! Well, then who knows
Our plot is out perhaps? So Grant's escaped?
What does it mean? Am I deserted, left
To act alone? Or maybe the bloody Chief
Has smelt the trap, and will not enter here
To nibble at the bait of mad applause
For his misdeeds.

MAN

No, the Chief will come.

BOOTH

And leave perhaps under an arch of swords.
Whatever happens — Payne will never fail me,

He owes too much to me, and he is mad
With the very madness of the War.

MAN

Insane!

BOOTH

Since Gettysburg. When first he came to me
That night in Richmond, I discerned what war
Had done to him, whether you call it madness
Or clearest thought. After the play it was
Where he had entered on a pass. Next night
I saw his giant figure dragging down
The darkness, and he came to me with eyes
Of slavish admiration, a derelict,
And starving. "I want bread," he said to me.
I asked him then if he would stick to me
For money. "To the death," he answered me;
I fed him then, and knew he was my man.
I got his story a little at a time.
He was sixteen when he enlisted. Think!
Now he's eighteen, and schooled in hell itself
Where drunken quarrels, hunger, oaths and blood
Make murder right, and vice the daily thing,
And cruelty a creed. That night it was
He told me of his brothers who were killed
At Murfreesborough, Southern soldiers too,
And as he spoke I saw the flapping flames
Of madness in his eyes from Gettysburg
Where he was captured after Pickett's charge.

He told me he got back to Lee again;
And then deserted. There he towered above me
A homeless, friendless, starving, wandering youth;
Nor was there use to fire his resolution
With words of ruined homes, and ravished women,
And the graves of brothers — he knew all; his eyes
Glittered the story. But there was a need
To show him that his traitorship could be
Expunged by action for the South. I did it.
Fame as the savior of his country made
Him burn for vengeance. Where his wounds were
scabbed
They bled again; and where was lust for death
Desire to live arose. I moulded him
Once more into his nature, and to hope.
Who mixed the bowl for him, whereof the Chief
Shall drink even to the dregs? The men who waged
This war and our subjection! There he learned
To long for letters, and to get no word;
To hope the war's end, and to be deceived;
To find a victory means another march;
To seek advancement, and to find it not;
To scorn his life and face a daily death;
To taste of blood and like its savor too;
There he breathed hate; there he read words of hate
For the North in letters, in the press, in orders
Of his own generals, at the camp fire too.
What else was said? Around him everywhere
Was hate of Lincoln; and every prisoner
From the North returned spoke hate. The ruined homes

Were curses of hate upon the silent land,
And the graves were colophons of hate; and moans
Of dying men bred hate. This is the madness
Which men call war. And if war be of God,
So is the madness, and this vagrant youth,
And so his will now and his great revenge,
And mine. Go find him.

MAN

Where?

BOOTH

Look! Get me brandy.

(*Exit man.*)

O my poor mother!
As for myself I care not what's the fate.
Will my poor mother understand? I have loved
A Union of benevolence, not this thing
Of force and fraud and blood. O, my loved South!
My Country! All your woe is due to him.
All, all! And now the South must die, or he.

SOLDIERS

And we'll all drink blind drunk
When Johnny comes marching home.

BOOTH

Yes, being drunk you will be drunker still.
You miners and you sappers of Liberty;
You courts, you sophists, who by day and night
Have worked like gravitation to undermine

The Charter of the Union, are at last
Supreme through Gettysburg, where you shot to death
Our last resistance, saving us the desperate
Of broken, maddened hearts. Revenge sets off
My powder dampened by untoward things.
Though he be followed by a thousand friends
I shall walk firm between them. I shall push
On, though they stop me. Though I hate to kill,
God makes me such an instrument.
What's foreshown
By the butcher Grant, the Attila made safe,
While the upstart clown whose will he has obeyed
Falls to my hand? This Fleance Grant escaped
While Banquo Lincoln dies? If so much as that,
And not the chief prize fluttering free as well,
No less I fail, if the butcher rise to rule
Out of the murderous code he has imposed
From Shiloh to Appomattox! And here I sit
"Bound in by saucy doubts and fears." Think now,
Resolve and smooth the bewildered brow of ripples
Which double and blur the image of the will.
One universal substance, and one law
Predestine repetitions when the wind
Of circumstance reblows, and Fleance escapes
Again and yet again to the end of time,
So long as the self-same currents of Fate unite;
Yes, and as often Banquo dies to leave
Some Macbeth with an empty enterprise.
Then shall I do it? For I have truth denied
Macbeth who failed; perhaps for nothing else

Save to contribute just such truth to men
That deeds like this must fail. But why when wars
Like his succeed? But let me think again:
There is a larger truth than my success,
My life, since God with murders and with wars
Writes the world's page. Is it not so? It's so!
Is the dagger less honored than the bayonet
In God's use? No! For Cæsar's taking off
Is greater in time than all the wars he won.
This Shakespeare told us. Who is wiser? None!
Well, Brutus died at Philippi, but was enskied
Forever as a star of magnitude,
Whose white contrasting splendor shows how red
The blood star is of Cæsar. Who is honored
Above the other now? Why Brutus is!
Who will outshine this Lincoln? My own star!
And that brave youth Harmodius and his friend
Who slew the tyrant Hippias — true they died,
Sent to their end by torture. But that Wisdom
Which flies the mob at first, then walks serene,
Established in its sovereign self-respect
When the mob goes off to feed, chose these two youths
For bronzèd patriots, martyrs along the gardens
Of Athens for all time to look upon.
Thus always is it that the light of heaven
Reveals the world, man's soul. Keep now to this,
Hold to this thought, this final truth. Hold now!

VOICES

But his soul is marching on!

BOOTH

To know what millions know, but yet to be
A dream-drugged brain that cannot stir its hand;
To think what millions think, but yet to falter
And give to hope no will; to wish what millions
Wish, but to hold the arm from making real
What the heart desires — shall that be longer I?
But if I be the only one to do
What millions pray shall be, shall I not do it,
And answer thus their prayers? Who spurs me on?
The tragic longing of a mourning land,
And millions who implore. Wherefore the truth:
It is not I, but life that has no conscience
Against this deed. Man knows what seed he chooses,
And when he scatters it; he does not make
The seed, nor form the pattern of its growth
To leaves and blossoms. It follows what shall be
Out of this act, and out of me so shaped
By God to do it, rests with God.... Two facts
Lie closely to my vision: First his wrong,
And next my bitter hate for him as wrong.
But as to hate is Northern hate of heaven,
And Southern hate of hell? Or are they both
Blent to the general picture of the world,
And both of God? ... Hence who is first to hang
Jeff Davis, as the North would have him hanged,
Or end this Lincoln, as the South desires,
Makes destiny! I am the one swift clot
In the blood of Time, rifted from rotting veins
To destroy a cosmic sin, out of discordant

Cycles of flesh spawned on us. This is so,
Or else life is what to the human mind
It seems, absurd! But that's the moment's glance,
And not the Ages' eye, to which all things
Look rational, as in the mind of God.
For otherwise life stands irrational
To man's mind, though it's rational to God's,
Who might have made it rational to man's.
What's left but action as the hour directs,
One's nature, and with confidence that the act
Will suit the weave, must suit it, even as all
Events of the past look fitting, inevitable?
This contemplated act is meaningless,
Not good, not evil, nothing, save it be
Part of the Destiny. But being part
It must be good, or there's no rule of God,
Or else all's nothing. Well, then, if he be evil
What do I do but push the clock ahead,
And make it strike what it will strike? If good
I end his flesh alone, nor harm his good.
All's destiny. And if it be of Fate
For him to die, or even to merit death,
Death or its equal will be his, and what
I fail to do will be made actual
Some way without me. I do not kill the fact
Of his life — not that; I kill the meaning which
Inheres in his existence, if God will it;
And that's the mystery above the worldly truth
Spoken by Milton, that no sacrifice
Is slain for God so much acceptable

As an unjust, wicked king; and he is such,
Who trampled down all laws to conquer us.

(*Atzerodt, O'Laughlin, Herold, and Nancy enter. They stand waiting for Booth to speak to them.*)

BOOTH

Look there! There stand my sneaks, gore lickers; there
The low, dull forehead, the reptile eyes, the jaws
Of tigers — come to do my will. O God,
I who am Shakespeare's son! How sunk am I,
How fallen from my glory! Not now the stage,
The lights, the eyes of thousands, the applause,
After the rapture's stillness when I spoke:
"The lights burn blue. It is now dead midnight;
Cold fearful drops stand on my trembling flesh.
What do I fear? Myself? There's none else by:
Richard loves Richard; that is I am I.
Is there a murderer here? No, yes, I am.
Then fly. What from myself?" Not now the stage,
But this dark alley of my conspiracy,
And these my audience of conspirators;
And I who have enacted Richard often
As a mere show, preparing to kill in truth.
Is it real? Do I dream? Are these ghosts standing there?
Or are they my own thieves with whom I shall
Be crucified? Come here! What news?

ATZERODT

Grant's gone.

BOOTH

I heard it.

ATZERODT

Rode guardless to the station,
Not even one policeman for protection.
How fair a mark!

O'LAUGHLIN

I had no chance.

BOOTH

No chance!
No chance! God gave you every chance, poor wretch,
There riding unattended.

O'LAUGHLIN

I did not know.

BOOTH

You should have known. Be off, coward and fool...
Well, Atzerodt —

ATZERODT

I lay in wait for hours,
Expecting him to come. He didn't come,
So I gave up.

BOOTH

You mean your courage failed.
So Johnson lives to be the succeeding head

If the first be lopped. Grant lives to execute
What the new brain directs. Go back and watch,
Till he comes and kill him. For remember now
That what is planned is good as done in law.
Know you that much? You'll know it if this plot
Comes to the light. Be off, be off.

(*Exeunt Atzerodt and O'Laughlin.*)

Go, Herold,
Be sure about the horses. Hear me now,
Be sure, be sure. What has become of Payne?

HEROLD

Who knows? I'll get the horses.

(*Exit.*)

BOOTH

Wretched fools
To fail me so! You're weeping, Nancy. Why?

NANCY

How can you ask?

BOOTH

In such great ventures,
Misfortune's bound to come. The messenger
Dispatched may mire, or drown, or trip to death;
But we who send him have that work to do
Which must be done, and which we may perform
Even though he fail. God holds us responsible
For ourselves alone, not for the aids we choose.

Quit crying! Don't unman me, as the time
Draws near for me to act. You must go soon.
Quit crying!

NANCY

Let me have the relief of tears.
When I behold you here, see what you are;
When I remember where you were before,
How followed, feasted, kneeled to for that brow
Wherein so much is treasured, then to see
How you sit here in darkness, all alone
Waiting a terrible hour, there is no place,
No soul in tragedy in all this appalling war
So great as this.

BOOTH

Be calm and do not grieve,
Grieve not for me. For in this very moment
A deep mysterious happiness is mine,
Thinking that I am set apart by God
To play a nobler part than speaking words
By rote. This is my comfort, and overpays
The loss of woman's love, and tranquil life
At a fireside with a growing brood to love,
And a wife, not mine by the destiny which rules.
I am, I have been so submerged in this
That riches, love, fair fame, and all that mortals
Live for and prize, and strive for are as meat
Which gods who grow on ethers and subtle fire
To infinite strength disdain. All these are nothing!

But as for that my art is ruined, first
By this changed spirit so perturbed by hate,
And sorrow; and next by the external death
Which the lumpish thing who soon will enter her
Has dealt it, having crushed it with the heels
Of War, named also trade. For well you know
My Southern audience is blown away.
And in the North to which these roaring troops
Out there are marching, truly I have no heart
To act again, seeing that banks and ships
Have overwhelmed me, as they broke the heart
Of the wizard of the Marble Faun, from whom
The eyes of a nation turned to note and count
Slaughter at Gettysburg; while he stood deserted,
Ignored, left breadless at the peak of life,
And in the radiant blossom of his power.
For this alone I am full of warrant for
The striking of this blow to vindicate
The children of Apollo, against the hand
Of this huge ape who barters bodies of men
For gold, and serves the gluttonous Mars withal.
Aye, warrant enough in Hawthorne, in myself.
But the cause mounts and crackles for the skulls
Of boys, the Hawthornes of a day to be,
Scattered along the rocks of Devil's Den,
And by the broken caissons where swift surprise
Of thicket shearing shot entangled them
To the decay of leaves and rain. O, great Apollo!
Apollo! He was slayer, too, with arrows
Of sudden death. He loves the lofty glory

Of ignorant pride, and makes it as a peak
For heaven's thunderbolt. Beloved Apollo,
God of the sudden death! Greater than Christ,
Who should have slain Tiberius, nor endured
His own death, and its ruin of rulership.
Nancy, some brandy.

(*The strange man enters.*)

MAN

I was delayed;
The doors are opening soon. Your brandy!

BOOTH

There! (*He drinks.*)
Watch and return.

(*Exit the man.*)

I am stronger now.

SOLDIERS

And we'll all drink blind drunk
When Johnny comes marching home.

BOOTH

Yes, you are marching home drunk now with power;
But while the caissons clank, and the iron gullets
Of cannon rumble the dreams of slaughter done;
And the thick abatis of a million bayonets
Guard,— yet revenge, gliding through closed doors,
And past unseeing sentries, may strike home
With just a derringer unpocketed;

Or an unsheathed blade, with looks as innocent
As a beam of light. What are these million guns?
Nothing against my will, which this lone alley
Swathes in its sightless shadows for Apollo.
Yet this my passionate heart beats all too fast,
And needs the aid of reasons, images,
And many speculations from all sides to show
That from whatever standpoint this be viewed,
Which I shall do, it has the assent of God.
This brandy is inadequate. Spur me on
With panoramas of innumerable graves
At Gettysburg, Cold Harbor; and confirm
His reported word that he would make the South
One boundless graveyard, till rebellion perished.
Talk, Nancy to me now. Or show me bones
From which the rusty rifle has fallen away;
Or where the knees of cypress look as stumps
Of amputated legs, by nigrosine
Pools of the swamp where lurks the moccasin
Coiled round the bones of fingers, or which nest
In the skulls of Pelhams, who in youth and life
Were breezed with flesh of lightning, blown with
storms
Of starry wonder — tell me horrors now,
Out of your wanderings, Nancy, through the South,
That my heart may not slow, or skip its beats,
Which races now to act.

NANCY

No, no, my friend!

BOOTH

Yes, yes! Do you desert me?

NANCY

I desert
Hatred for love, evil for good, and soul's
Defeat for soul's success. I once the spy,
And hiding that by being sometimes nurse,
Am all nurse now. And as at Gettysburg
I played the part of nurse to spy their secrets
And help our prisoners, where I loosed the bars
For Payne escaping —

BOOTH

Oh wonderful sign of Fate!
You did this? My reason totters —

NANCY

Yes, my friend;
Now I would help him to escape again,
And you —

BOOTH

Well, good —

NANCY

Not after you have done it,
But now, before.

BOOTH

Why, as for him how so?
Even now perhaps he has sent to his just death
That Seward of the higher law, and turned
The higher law to deal with Gettysburg.
He planned this night to do it; he's about
That business, or he'd be here. For this youth
Has followed me like a loving Newfoundland
With some strange adoration in his eyes,
Which he has told me led him to stare rapt
My Richard III. The deep coincidence
Of him and you at Gettysburg; of him
Emerging there at Richmond from the darkness
To ask for bread, and give in turn to me
His very soul, all this cannot be fathomed
Save that it be from God. But flying now,
And leaving Payne to walk the way alone
Would be from hell, not God. Soon as I laid
This night's plan to his eyes he said to me,
"It is my duty, I'll obey your word";
Just as obeying he left home to fight
At Antietam for the South, or rushed
Obeying there with Pickett's men. In vain
To ask me to desert him.

NANCY

Don't desert him;
Come, let us find him, tell him of your mind
Changed, and so save him.

BOOTH

No, and although you give
No antiphon to this roaring insolence,
These horns and drums and shouts, still I am grown
Stronger this moment. For the Janus Powers
Whose double tongues conflicting at first as notes
Concurrent, though discordant, were but noise,
Sing now together in a mingled tune,
And are two melodies of harmonious sound,
And simultaneous song. The gods throw dice,
And these are the charmed numbers. As for me
Who helped to hang John Brown, if I succeed
With this night's work, and Payne reach Seward's heart,
What is their Gettysburg but a vain Aceldama,
When we catch sleeping in their bloody tents
The captains of that slaughter, and undo
All murders which they did?

NANCY

You do but prove
That being so much wronged you are transformed
To a devil. But you might become a god
From the same great wrongs.

BOOTH

Well, by the love of heaven
What has come over you? Look at me straight!
Shall I still trust you? A devil! Where's your eyes?
Do I not stand obedient to the law

Above all laws, enacted by my country,
My mother, justice? Help me now or leave!

NANCY

You shall hear both the evil and the good,
Both hate and love, and hearing you must guide
Your soul as you have wisdom, truth.

BOOTH

Well, what?
You pause and think. Speak! Well! What?

NANCY

These two months
Past in the Wilderness as Lee fought back
The bludgeon Grant, who fast as the lance of Lee
Bled the approach of inexhaustible troops
Sent in fresh masses to wear away defeat,
And with guns, ammunition, food and shoes
Backed by the North's unanimous hate to make
Of every home a tomb — these past two months
I have seen the footprints of the giant Death.
One night — 'twas February of a mild, dim sky,
And darkness such as fitted my careful stealth,
Taking my secret way to Washington;
For I foresaw the speedy end of Lee,
The gladiator by the mob assailed
With stones, pikes, nets, and knives; and I would come
Here where the ever alluring hope implied
Something might be of life —

BOOTH

Keep back your tears!

NANCY

We are love-sick for something, all of us
Who live, for life is passion, nothing else,
For something nameless. Some may call it peace,
Some love, some heaven, some the secret pain
Which dreams what we shall be, if we shall be
After this earth. But war somehow makes brighter
The flashing of its evanescent wings,
And the unsleeping sickness at the heart
Wakes oftener to weep.

BOOTH

There you have touched it —
You touched it! More of this.

NANCY

I walked foot-sore
In country of the lulled, lone battlefield,
Abandoned for retreat. So still it was
As I entered the darkness of a wood to sleep
That I could hear my heart beat; and no sound
Of human life, of watch-dog, or of bell
Of returning flocks, or voices at the close
Of the day's affairs, was in the air, which hung
As silent as the smoky moss of oaks
There leaning amid the glooming forestry.
Sleep was upon me as I stumbled on,

Caught amid briers, or by branches tripped,
Lying where canister had cast them down,
Or wind. But such mad hell of war still stormed
Where Grant as hunter with his howling packs
Drove Lee to bay, that the quietness of that woodland
Made fears for me, a spy; and a shadow twisted tree,
Or stump gave to my sleepless weariness
The shape of a following foe. Yet I must sleep.

SOLDIERS

And we'll all drink blind drunk
When Johnny comes marching home.

BOOTH

Wait till those troops pass... Now! what happened then?

NANCY

My foot slipped on some roundness and I sprawled.
I touched it, thinking it a cannon ball.
It was a skull.

BOOTH

A skull!

NANCY

So I had come
Where men had died for liberty of the South;
But I must sleep, and was there holier bed
Than where these slept forever?

BOOTH

Have mercy on us!

NANCY

I sat amid the leaves and peered about,
Then chose where I had fallen for sleep, and paused
Some moments staring the misty sky, where curved,
Or leaned the thicket of trunks, or branches laced
The ashen overcast; or a few lonely leaves,
Still hanging, etched the silver light around,
And no air stirred. It was the stillness of eyes
Where the enemy hides, or where the dead divine
The tragedy of men, and watch. With care,
With little rustling, I picked or scraped the leaves
To make a couch, and threw aside the hail
Of bullets, numbing to a sleeper's flesh;
Then as I lay I stared the sky.

BOOTH

You soul
Of Lady Macbeth which you have often played!

NANCY

Yes! And as that blurred darkness became a light
To my roaming eyes, I went on counting skulls,
Which lay about me.

BOOTH

If they were the dead of Grant —

NANCY

I made myself believe they were our boys.
I counted them over, and called them dear, dead brave,
Our adorable lost, and calling thus I slept.
And then I dreamed . . .

BOOTH

There! Nancy, do not weep!
Can you go on? Or was it the dream of one
For whom your love was greater than for me?
Well, wait a moment.

NANCY

I thought against that light
And the glimmer of that wood I saw the face
And form of the archangel Pelham, our cannoneer,
Who fell at Kellysville with the flash of wings
Of flame in his eyes, and on his lips the cry
Of liberty.

BOOTH

You inspire me now. Go on!
Did he speak to you?

NANCY

He was all beautiful,
All courage, all serenity, all faith.
But in that dream I knew that I was shaken
By those awakened sobs which sleep by day;
And yet I did not wake; but the dream went on

Despite those tears which said, you do not sleep.
So as he stood there with those boyish eyes,
Which looked unutterable sorrow, and wisdom too,
His lips moved and he spoke, and I wrote down
At dawn his words.

BOOTH

What were they?

NANCY

How could I,
Not skilled in words, hear and remember too,
And write them? Judge, my friend, what they import,
What message to your spirit they convey,
These are the words:
Amid the hush of the distant hills which house
The sleeping meadows, oak leaves loose and fall
Across the sunlight, and along the rhythmical
Wash of the air upon this shore of boughs.

Leaves drift around the bronzes. But over the grass
Of the field where Pickett's men defied
The grape shot and the cannon, and who died,
The shadows of October's clouds repass.

No shouts arise from the vanished garrisons;
No sound is here of wounded man or steed;
Meade stares at Lee, and Lee at Meade
Across a mile of pasture, eyed in bronze,

Where flies the solitary crow. Beyond
The spires of Gettysburg the skies implore;

And near the cattle graze, and grackles soar
Where the air is tranced as by a wizard's wand.

Till now it is a suspended mood whose gleam
Is like an invisible crystal which enspheres
The souls it veils, who with Elysian ears
List the far voice of undiscovered dream.

This stillness is the indifference of the sky,
The tranquil Muses behind the mountains hid,
Who suffer the Fate's beginning, nor forbid,
Nor ask the battle, nor mourn the tragedy.

Still they are brooding in their fanes afar;
And now they stir the oak leaves with their breath,
Saying there is no life, neither is death,
Nor victors, nor defeated, nor fame, nor war;

But only music at last out of the dreams of these,
As the one reality which overtones the mime,
The landscape, nations, races, even Time,
Quiring eternal Nature whose heart is peace.

BOOTH

Whose heart is peace!

NANCY

Let me go on. At dawn
I woke to count those skulls again, but more:
I found that as my weight had sunk the leaves
Where I had slept, they had upcurved the bones
Of an arm still hinged together, and this arm

Circled my breast and with its unfleshed fingers
Lay over my heart, which gave me to believe
That I had slept among our dead, not theirs . . .

BOOTH

You shake me, Nancy.

NANCY

Oh, I wept, my friend,
There in that desolate dawn of sorrowful wind,
Which with the wide wings of some solemn flight
Winnowed that silence, and swayed the unbudded trees.
Between the purpling thicket I could see
Low hills on which the gilded sunshine fell,
And from afar a wondering bird was calling;
While the inaudible step of Spring made sweeter
That solitude which brooded with living pain,
And memory which will not die. I rose
As the sound of the wind ascended from the valley
Like an anguished soul; and my soul drifted with it
Wounded and dazed where the pulse of its symphony
Sounded along the hills. I rose to haste
Hither to you with Pelham's vision of peace,
His words that there is neither fame nor war,
Nor victors, nor defeated, but only music
Out of the dreams of these, which means that love
Is the all of life.

BOOTH

But not the love of man,
For whom love is impossible. Our best strength

Rises no higher than to tolerate
Our fellows, if so much. But love of God
Is the all of life; and for that love of God
I have surrendered all that men call love.
For any earthly love I have clasped close
To my breast the fervor, transport, passion, heart
For the eternal dream which comforted
Keats with the unfinished odes, and which sustained
The rejected Leopardi, the lover, the prophet;
Or brought to Schubert's tortured youth the rapture
Of music unattained. Was our own Poe
Without this ecstasy? No, in this land of trade
The ravens made the desert beautiful,
And made him holy. This is the bread of life
Which whoso eats can never die, being served
To youth whom yet the noise of this foul world
Has not drowned out God's voice. Are we then duped?
Do we follow only what we dream the wonder,
The something is, the ideal? Even so
Why are we duped, why do we follow?

NANCY

Wilkes,

Yet a word more. Not the victor's arrogance,
Nor the triumph of this giant wrong can reach
Hearts with such great sufficiency as yours,
And mine uplifted to the beauty of life.
Though all Virginia's arms are spoiled and stacked,
Her soul remains in the vision which assumed
Arms for the vision, and which possessing it

Not less than in the War will fend the malice
Of the North forever, where the sepulchres
And urns of our great dead will keep us still
Reverent. Nor may the spirit of the foeman
Pass over thresholds, or sit down by hearths
Where love is of two beings, and simple faith,
And the fare is of the unresisting heart.
Call to your memory those slopes of pines
By little fields where spring comes down, or shores
Where sea winds wake the coverts of first flowers,
And where to wander when the April sings
Is heaven and oblivion of all strife.
There the felled oak may build the peaceful haven;
And there your youth may see the apple trees
Planted by you bear fruit. And there the bees
Shall ply their murmurous toil, and meadowed sheep
Shall crop with tinkling bells. Would I could say
That there my presence would be crowning joy
To you.

BOOTH

It cannot be.

NANCY

But if some word
Of God would give you love instead of hate.

(*The strange man enters.*)

MAN

The audience is gathering.

(*Exit.*)

BOOTH

And my hour
Must be endured alone, nor woman's fears,
Nor pleas unman it. When the deed is done
I'll join you in Virginia.

NANCY

When it's done.
But if you fail?

BOOTH

I can't.

NANCY

Or do it,
And die for doing it.

BOOTH

My desire to live
Died with my country. Nancy, farewell—

NANCY

Farewell.
This kiss now for your brow so beautiful.

BOOTH

So stormed, so anguished.

NANCY

Farewell!
(*Exit.*)

BOOTH

So alone!
They fall from me one by one. They are as leaves
Stripped by this stormy time, or by the frost
Of my cold will, which for myself denying
Life, happiness leave shriveled all the stems
By which our friends are held. This is the price
Of greatness, and before that of the vision
Which suffers barrenness for another Spring.
What have I left? My mother, but afar,
And by that distance lost, and by this path
Which leads me ever farther from her arms.
Shall we two meet again? Is there aught else?
This poor, adoring, servile derelict
From Gettysburg. Payne! Payne! But he can say
My only friend, poor Booth. And what a friend,
Never his friend unless God bless us both.
Superior years and wisdom fit me for
The rôle of elder brother who might guide
His steps to life, whereas I lead him down
To the same hell where I have come myself.
How can a father keep his grave in peace
When a son born with his blood, and in a time
Made from ancestral ignorance, descends
To the consequence of what that father was,
And suffers as Payne does, and as I do?
(*The strange man enters.*)

MAN

A ripple of laughter like a sudden breeze
Runs through the audience, and whispers pass —

BOOTH

Has he come in?

MAN

No, but the Union flag
Was raised today on Sumter.

BOOTH

That's a lie —
But a lie that fires me!

MAN

On the stage the actors
Say that Columbia is in flames let loose
By Sherman.
(*Great cheering from Pennsylvania Avenue.*)
Hear that cheering? That's the cause.

BOOTH

But what were Roman legions if Cæsar stepped
On a sand hidden cerastes?

MAN

Just this moment
An actor from the South today returned
Was telling this: A Yankee captain sent
To Charleston with a company of troops

Swore in some negro soldiers, and with them
Set off along the Ashley River, where
The gardens and the ancient mansions are.
There coming to the Middleton estate,
Owned by that Arthur first, who was a signer
Of the great Declaration, they broke in,
And entered the Tudor Halls of that abode;
Brought forth the many thousand books and burned
Such treasures on the lawn. They hopped the piano
With hobnailed boots and ruined it; they pierced
The pictures with their bayonets, and struck
The marbles down with hammers. Then they burned
The mansion down.

BOOTH

Yes, Well! Go on! Some more.
It makes me glow. It's brandy of fiercer flame.

MAN

They laid their axes to the apple trees;
Slaughtered the beasts they did not take for food;
Then they descended to the family vault
Where Arthur Middleton of the father's faith
And his descendants lay entombed. From thence
They dumped the poor, dumb, unresisting bones
Upon the ground.

BOOTH

They did? They? He! Say he.
He who would render all the South a tomb,

Save we surrendered! He! Who comes tonight,
And never leaves. Look to your watch. Come back
With brandy when it's time.
(*Exit man.*)
Oh, but to die in the hour
Of the ecstasy that lives posthumous fame,
And so to be immortal where we stand,
Nor step to doubt, nor drag to the dull scene
Where what we hoped grows faded, gray or false.
To live in an ignorant land, and then to die
After long years, but knowing that your fame
Must wait or never be, and dying to doubt.
I'll never do it. I'll go now or soon.
Yet the mixed meditations of this act
Outweigh one brain. Ha! What is this I dream:
That he has planned his fame through measured words
Spoken at Gettysburg, so strung to hide
The Cashtown crapulence, which dug the graves
For that blaspheming dedication. Save
For that juggling Fate which never man divines
It had been Cashtown and not Gettysburg,
And rightly named for the consequence of oil
Thence flowing, and in which a people's feet
Will slip to hell. The Cashtown Address! Well,
The truth sounds not so well, while Gettysburg
Bewitches with a lie. God give me eyes
To see why this rude, rustic sophist tongue,
This anthropophagus out of a bloody cave
Plucked for a moment the imperishable harp to sound
Above the shrieks of Petersburg, and the moans

Of Shiloh's church, and the last expiring wail
Of Liberty itself! Shall I augment
With martyrdom that utterance, or trust
The glare of history on a natural death
To show in chief above those moving words
His slow and bungling leadership of troops,
His indecision and unstatesmanship,
His ignorance, but his hunger for applause;
And his first breaking of the law which brought
These deaths and boundless woe? And worst of all
The apostasy from the faith he first proclaimed
Of revolution's right? If killing him
Should be my hate's defeat, and his success,
Who planned his own eternal fame! Great God,
Where shall I turn? Or shall I strike and let
God mould the future fitting it to the act
Which God enjoins upon me? I am crushed
By the music and vision of a higher sphere,
Which make man greater than the daily flesh,
Yet falsify him if they do not speak
His harmony with some far sublimity,
Divined in moments when the soul's a sea
Without a sound around its rocky shores,
And over all is the light of a setting sun.

(*A Union flag is hung out of the window, just over Booth.*)

SOLDIERS

And we'll all drink blind drunk.
When Johnny comes marching home.

BOOTH

The millions who are armed, and the millions for whom
They march and speak fill me with giant fears,
For this monstrous power and ignorance which can raise
By the shout of an avalanche, or the secret flame
Of telegraphs, and the forged page of print,
Him, anyone who furthers their corn and oil.
They by the iterant chant of idiot things
Can elevate above the names of Morse,
Franklin or Jefferson a common boor,
Or whom they choose. And this is fame! Against
This insurmountable bulk of money strength,
And animal sagacity we the few
Torch bearers must contend, obeying God,
Lest the light of the world go out. My father, too,
An actor's name alone, forgotten quite;
And myself a mere frivolity amid
This carnival of hate and blood, these troops
Which march, rejoice and sing. When just behold:
Where he is tilted, warted and malformed
I am straight and fair. Where he is knobbed and gnarled
I am smooth and leafed. Where he is slow and dull
Through caution, craft, my thought is swift and keen;
Where he has fed his mind on legal tricks,
I have unfolded mine through poetry;
Where he is twisted logic of rough rope
I am imagination whose tenfold eye
Discovers stars. And where he has feared death,
And studied portents I am calm even now.

Yes, while he almost lost this war for soldiers
Held in this capital to guard his person,
I have walked fearless. And now this night when he
Comes here the sacred object of these cannon,
And bayonets, I sit here lightly armed
Not for myself, but that I may destroy
War waged for tyranny. And where applause
Has stormed around him that he slew, and piled
His tens of thousands around the law, invoked
For slaughter, contempt and hatred, but not applause
May be my portion forever if I slay
Just this one man, and by an equal law.
Who then is brave? He who, though failing, must
Have had the honors of war, or I who though
Succeeding in this act chance the ages' hate?
Would it were over!

VOICES

Through our Great Chief's firm courage and discretion
  Slain is the snake Secession.
  By our manhood and our power
  Passed is the traitor's hour.
Awake and sing, O, Nation now restored
  By the sharpness of our sword,
  By the will of God, the Almighty Lord.
Richmond is fallen, and all the foe is flying,
  Amid their conquered and their dying.

Columbia burns, and on the Sumter walls
The flag of the Union to the wind arises, falls.

See where the rivers flow again
To the emancipated main,
And where the ports are clear!
Where is their gunboat "Patrick Henry," where
Their "Merrimac," "Virginia," drunk
With vanity — all sunk!
Where are their boasting armies now
Which marched away with Jackson, Lee?
Where the heaven recorded vow
To make their people free?
Where is Davis and where is Stephens,
Benjamin, Mallory, Campbell, Clay?
Doomed to the gallows or prison bars —
Where are they? Where are they?

BOOTH

O God in heaven on my people's woe
Look down with pity;
Upon our dead, the fruits of this hated foe;
Upon my city
Richmond in flames, and on the fair estates
In desolation;
Have mercy on the broken pride, the gates
Of a ruined nation.

SOLDIERS

Out of two thousand battles we have come
At last victorious.
These cannon at Gettysburg made dumb
The foe inglorious.

These are the caissons gray, whose rattling wheels
  Carried munition;
This is the cavalry, and these the steels
  Which smote sedition.
These are the veterans, the might and the stress
  Of a Union greater
Who held Round Top, and in the Wilderness
  Trapped Lee the traitor.

BOOTH

I only in this alley, in this spell
  Unsubjugated
Fling back the taunt of insolence out of hell,
  Of wrath unsated
Shout hatred to the stars, but God will laugh
  Being high above it.
There's poison in the drunken cup you quaff,
  And I am of it.

VOICES

With the cannon's fiery breath
Was Secession shot to death.
Never cramped our sovereignty,
Wide as ever the land shall be.
Never the rights of States to bar
Power in peace and strength in war.
The ancient Law is scrolled again
Imperially, but for freemen.
Where Lincoln's planetary glory shines
Set is the distant star of Jefferson,

His counsel dies, his fame declines,
His rulership is done.

BOOTH

If it be so, if this be heaven's rod
  Let men endure it.
Yet this hand strikes not, save it be that God
  Direct, inure it.
This Chief of Armies whose devotion prized
  This woe and slaughter,
Obeying God, as I do, is baptized
  With the same water.
But of this solemn music which so blinds,
  My soul assailing
With voices calling, and sounds of autumn winds
  In valleys wailing.
This sorrow, as if I stood on high afar
  On a promontory,
In a pale inane, and where the morning star
  Looks down in glory.

SOLDIERS

Good-by, Father Abraham, and health and luck to you!

BOOTH

Such loving farewell to this man, and none
  To me despairing;
Nor mother's kiss, nor hand of friend or son
  My sorrow sharing.

I am crushed down with all my country's grief,
Nor can live through it.
But those troops there! This sovereignty in chief —
How can I do it?
(*Booth sees Payne coming from the alley around the theatre.*)

BOOTH

Poor boy! Poor foolish, broken boy! Just look!
(*Payne comes near.*)
Well, here we are, we two, the sole two men
Who fight on undefeated. Is it because
There are but two who understand each other?
We do, don't we?

PAYNE

Why, yes.

BOOTH

Give me your hand.
Was that the hand you carried your rifle with
At Gettysburg?

PAYNE

No, I'm left handed.

BOOTH

So?
Then give me that. You haven't done it?

PAYNE

No!
I was about to when I met that woman;
She said you wanted to see me.

BOOTH

So I do.
It's not too late to change our minds. You see
I haven't done it either. Let us quit.

PAYNE

You mean that? You don't mean it! What you say
Is law with me. Of course I need the money;
But maybe later I can find some work.
I look strong, don't I, big and strong, but war
Did something to me, I can't tell you what;
Something is eating me; I'm really sick.
I've followed you like a dog. I am a dog,
And you can say, come here, or, go away,
Or catch the rabbit, or let the rabbit go,
And I'll obey. But what's the use to live?
There was no sense in my being born. What for?
To hear at home nothing but poverty,
And hate of the North. And then to go to war
Because they made me. Then to love to kill,
And to be ordered here and everywhere,
To face the bullets same as you would rain;
And to be starved, and have no shoes; and then
To be a prisoner, and be mauled to work;
And to escape and join the army again;

And then desert, and tramp about — no food,
Afraid of everything and starving too.
Why was I born? You're the best friend I ever
Had in my life.

BOOTH

Your mother!

PAYNE

Too many children,
Not enough to eat. This Lincoln, they say, was poor,
As poor a boy as I. What made him be
So mean to the South?

BOOTH

He has the despot's blood.

PAYNE

I guess so. Well, I'll do my duty, Sir.
Just tell me what to do, and I'll obey.
I have a pistol and a knife beside.
I bought that medicine for old Seward too;
And I'll get in his house, and in his room,
Pretending I'm delivering medicine.
And when I get there, I'll go for his heart,
Or throat or belly. And I'll get away;
I can whip any four men in the world
When I am riled... Who hung that Union flag
Out of the window? You sat under it.

BOOTH

Why! This portends what? My hand
Shakes like a reed. Why, how did that get there?
I never saw it. Some metaphysic thing
Glides here and there. Grant has escaped, that's first;
And Johnson bides too long for the patient watch;
You haven't done it yet. And then this flag,
Which by a living principle once held
Our hearts together, but no more is the sign
Of justice, humanity and benevolence,
But means now inequality and privilege,
And Cæsarism. That hung above my head
Symbols the rulership of defeated millions,
Dishonored, denied their part, debarred a voice,
Shut from the Nation's life, used, taxed, enslaved
By cliques and courts. And where such stoppage is
The brain grows wickeder through a body fouled.
This is world business which you do not know,
My devoted boy. That flag now is the badge
Of our admission to the imperial game
Where the world's gold, hidden in secret vaults
Is a magnet hub which turns what way it will
All labor, honest thrift, and which makes war
As it will or when. While this poor rustic clown
Has served a world conspiracy, as he mouthed
Liberty and Union, for which he shed
Our people's blood.

PAYNE

Then why not kill him?

BOOTH

Hell!
I'll tear the forgery down.
(*He mounts the bench, but cannot reach the flag.*)
Lift me to your shoulders.
(*Payne does so. Booth tugs at the flag, but it will not come down.*)
What was that noise?
(*In getting down from Payne's shoulders Booth falls.*)

PAYNE

You've hurt yourself.

BOOTH

Yes, a little. But Great God,
That flag and then my fall! Is it too strong
For me? Have you some brandy?

PAYNE

Here!

BOOTH

Well, now
Let me think —

SOLDIERS

And we'll all drink blind drunk
When Johnny comes marching home.

BOOTH

Oh those hell voices! Wait! I know; let's hear
How Pickett failed. How after West Point took him
At the nod of Lincoln twenty years ago
He came at Gettysburg to the cunning hand
Which gives and takes as pleases it, and was cupped;
While you not being born then, soon emerged
To be a poor pawn in a game that Fate
Planned as you puled. Smooth innocent nothings twist
Their edge to us, whatever we do. Well, now
This brandy set afire that I may drink
Spirits with flame; and tell me, quick! quick! quick!

PAYNE

I can't describe it. I haven't words.

BOOTH

Go on!

PAYNE

You don't see everything. You don't see much.
You listen for orders, and you're scared; you watch,
You only see ahead of you, and run.
You see men fall in front of you, or a fellow
Beside you with his head off pitch or drop.
You hear the shells explode, you hear the cannon,
The bullets whistle by you; there is smoke,
Men yell like devils; everyone is crazy—
That's all.

BOOTH

Go on! Tell how the battle began,
How you were ordered to the charge. Tell that,
Tell everything you saw.

PAYNE

Jesus, but it was hot!
The sun just burned us up. The first thing was
We shelled their lines, that lasted several hours;
And they shelled us, you'd thought that hell was loose;
Our eardrums almost busted. I saw a fellow,
Just ramming at his cannon, and zip, boom,
He lay there cut in two, a cannon ball
Took him so quick he didn't know what hurt him;
And horses got it too. I saw a horse
With broken legs, they whinny terrible
When they are hurt. Well, there was dust and blood,
And yells and everything; and the air was blue
With sulphur. We could hardly breathe.

BOOTH

Were you
Scared then?

PAYNE

I guess so. Yes, you're scared at first,
Then you get mad. When you see a comrade killed,
You want to kill, you're mad, and so that helps.
Well, pretty soon their cannon ceased to fire;
And so we stopped, and the air was just as still
As a summer afternoon. So the word went round

That we had whipped them; and all down our lines
The order came to march; and from the woods
And orchards we arose with battle flags,
And shiny bayonets. Well, I was where
I saw the lines form, and I saw the first
Come forth, take step and march; and then another
Followed, and then another, till that meadow
Was alive with thousands stretching out a mile.
By God, you never saw a thing so great:
Nobody stopped, nobody seemed afraid.
They went right on, and I was running too.
We didn't know we had to go so far;
It was a mile, but when we were a third
Across that meadow, then we knew for fair
What we had tackled; for we saw two miles
Of Union guns so thick there wasn't room
For any more. And that's what human flesh
Was going against — flesh against steel.
Poor, half-fed flesh, against those enemies
Fat, and well clothed, and armed, behind the walls,
Or earthworks. So I said my goose is cooked,
Just as my brothers' was at Murfreesborough.
No matter, I made up my mind to fight,
Because they killed my brothers, and I knew
That my mother was downhearted — so she wrote me.
So I said "fight," and may God damn their souls!
I remember a sunk road, because we mended
Our broken lines when we passed it; and just then
Their long range guns began to find us. Shells
Were busting all around us, and I could see

Men fall around me everywhere. But on we went,
You bet we went; and as fast as men went down
The ranks closed up. Now it was worse than ever,
More thunder and more dust, more yells, more blood,
I saw legs off, arms off, and scattered brains —
But on we went — you bet we went right on.
Some of us were as pale as snow, and some
Had trembling lips, but not a soldier paused.
Now we were nearing the earthworks and the wall;
And in a second their infantry arose
And let us have it. Christ, you never saw
What happened now! It looked just like ripe wheat
When a thousand scythes are after it — down we fell;
But on we went. Now I remember seeing
Their officers go riding here and there,
Waving their hands, and yelling orders, too,
But of course you couldn't hear them. And by God,
I saw a dozen horses galloping
Without a rider — we had picked them off;
And caissons were exploding, and the smoke,
The dust, the noise were hell and nothing less.
You'd think that everyone of us would be killed,
And I don't know why we weren't, for on we went.
And somehow — I don't know — I found myself
Right at the front, where we had pierced the center.
Well, I went crazy when I heard a voice,
"Give them cold steel," that was from Armistead
Who had hopped the wall and led within their lines.
"Give them cold steel." We tried. But there's a fellow
Stronger than steel, they call him Mr. Death,

He didn't get me there, but he got enough.
For just then they let off their double shotted
Cannon right in our faces, blowing us to hell!
Thousands went flying through the air; it looked
Like when you wing a duck and feathers fill
The air all around. Well, then we broke and ran,
We couldn't stand it. But they captured me.
That's all that I remember.

BOOTH

It's enough!
Enough! Take Seward the medicine, and may it cure —
Our country. Go!

PAYNE

I shall obey you, Sir.
(*Exit.*)

BOOTH

His prayer was that this Nation under God
Might have a new birth of freedom. Let me think!
What does it mean? Is that prayer answered? No!
Success in arms for which he louder prayed
Has been bestowed, and our overthrow has come
Responsive to his prayer. Well, what is left
Of God to trust? As ever the excess of hearts,
Evil keep down the fewer hearts of good,
And by a fiercer energy, and more deeds
Make life an evil when it's summed. Yet good
Survives and dies not. Hence my prayer to God
For Liberty and my Nation may be answered

For Liberty, my Nation being lost. This mind,
This doubting, bewildered, half-blind instrument
With which I think! It would be better tuned
If God expected better things of me
Than what I do. That's true! Then hold to that!
(*Re-enter strange man.*)

MAN

He's in the box.

BOOTH

He's — that is true?

MAN

It's true.

BOOTH

The corridor?

MAN

You can pass.

BOOTH

Of course I'll pass.
He's in the box. O wonderful! Brandy!

MAN

Drink!

BOOTH

I'm ready. Stand near and help me.

MAN

Yes.

(*Exit.*)

BOOTH

God! If I die, send my poor mother word
I died for my country.... Now I mean to do,
And do alone what armies could not do.
(*He enters the theatre. The marching of soldiers along the streets proceeds.*)

SOLDIERS

Step, comrades, step, for the war is over
And the country's saved at last.
Let us go back to the land of clover,
For I can't get there too fast.
I dreamed last night of a face at the window
On a prairie in Illinois;
I dreamed I saw my home in Ohio,
Where I lived as a boy.
The battle's done, ha, ha,
The land is saved, ho, ho;
Now double quick, for my girl is waiting,
And I am bound to go.

Step! Step! March! March!
Beat the bass drums, rattle the snare drums;
Rumble the wheels where the cannon comes
Right, left; now under the arch.

For we're going back to Pennsylvania,
And we're going to Vermont;
We'll cross the ridge of the Allegheny,
For home is what we want.

We'll leave the rest to Mr. Lincoln
  Who knows what's best to do;
And we'll stack our guns, and smile and wonder
  At the old Red, White and Blue.
For Lincoln won, ha, ha,
And Davis lost, ho, ho.
Now double quick, for my girl is waiting,
And I am bound to go.

(*Herold enters with the horses. Suddenly from the theatre there are cries of rage and horror. Booth enters limping.*)

HEROLD

What is the matter?

BOOTH

Why, the damned flag draped
From the box got tangled with my spur. I fell
While leaping to the stage. But I killed him first.
Come, help me mount.

(*Herold helps Booth. They ride away rapidly.*)

BOOTH

The South is avenged

(*Exeunt.*)

SOLDIERS

For Lincoln won, ha, ha;
And Davis lost, ho, ho;
Now double quick, for my girl is waiting,

And I am bound to go.
Ha, ha, ha,
Ho, ho, ho;
And I am bound to go.

(*Payne enters disguised as a laborer, carrying a pick. Immediately following him are four Union soldiers.*)

FIRST SOLDIER

What are you doing here?

PAYNE

I've come to work.

SECOND SOLDIER

At this hour?

(*He snatches a bandanna handkerchief from Payne's head.*)

THIRD SOLDIER

You killed the President.

PAYNE

I never did.

FOURTH SOLDIER

Well, by God! Look!

THE OTHERS

What?

FOURTH SOLDIER

Here is the Rebel soldier
I captured by the trees at Gettysburg!

PAYNE

No, sir. Never!

FOURTH SOLDIER

You lie! I know you.
Come take him. Take him and win old Gettysburg again!

(*They seize Payne and march him away. Many people rush from the stage door crying, "Booth," "Booth." "It was Booth." The soldiers in the street are singing:*)

SOLDIERS

For Lincoln won, ha, ha;
And Davis lost, ho ho.
Now double quick, for my girl is waiting,
And I am bound to go.

Manila

TO THE MEMORY OF

EDWARD·J·KING

Who as a Member of the United States Congress
From Illinois for Fourteen Years, Raised His
Voice for Philippine Independence
to the last

Manila

Characters
OF THE POEM

Apolinario	Messengers
General Aguinaldo	American Soldiers
General del Pilar	Filipino Spies
General Funston	etc.

SCENE: *On a mountain top overlooking the gorge of Montalban near Manila.*

APOLINARIO

High on this ledge of rock above this gorge
Of Montalban I look below where flows
The river, glassed with hues of shadowed green

From these pine slopes; or where as an image caught
In a moving mirror, it holds the sculptured shapes
Of granite juts; or streaks itself with scars,
Made when Luzon, Mindoro and Panay
Survived the sea as isles, and as a strand
Of broken jewels off the Asian breast
Were scattered from Banguey to Camiguin
When flame and deluge seized the isthmian plains
And sunk them, while the mountain heights remained.
This is that sky which saw it, calm, unchanged;
But these huts in the valley are of those
Whom war and want drove hither; and these fields
Of rice have been their labor and the food
Of their oppressors, monarchs, captains, priests.
Earth stillness, such as follows on the foot-steps
Of an earthquake broods, save for the call of doves,
And birds that chirp unseen. The mountain road
Sends up no sound where the calesa crawls,
All is as quiet as my mood.
O, Isles,
Unfortunate, unblest! Is there no escape
From man whose evil nature but repeats
Under the rule of circumstance the same
Story of blood and gold? Must life be even
As hills, as earth scenes, which obey the laws
And spirit of fire and water, and make again
Valleys and hills in the hard similitude
Of those the traveler left behind? Today,
Must it be yesterday? And tomorrow be
Interpreted by the past, which I have read?

Have these two thousand isles of fertile sun-shine
No strong protection for their toil and hope
From man nor God? But must they still surrender
The product of their sweat in recompense
Of a rulership imposed by the false tyrant word
That our good is intended, which crops evil,
While their good is achieved, which brings them gold?

The black man flying the fierce Cambises gained
Before the days of Saul or Homer's hymns
The wooded uplands of Luzon, and lived
Their freedom since. But those who came in search
Of liberty, when Java and Borneo
Fell to the Hindoo sword, what is their wage,
What has it been, for bringing to these isles
Laws, arts and crafts and ancient pieties,
And lores and mysteries from that India
Where man emerged to wisdom, and became
The equal brother, though of lesser years,
Of Egypt and of China? What is their wage?
Want, tears, blood, slavery and endless woe!
But we were heir
To India's two thousand years of thought,
And China's; and when Europe's midnight reigned,
When Caedmon sang, nor many years had passed
After the rise of Mecca we were here;
And while the dynasties of T'Ang and Ming,
And Sung dreamed porcelain and bronze and silk,
And paper, and with powder levied war,
And with the compass sailed the seas, we tilled

These isles and traded with Canton, and kept
Markets of cotton, silk and porcelain,
And jeweled gold, and earthenware and wheat,
And books of divers alphabets; and we made
Such laws as suited us, and worshipped gods
Fashioned from our peculiar dreams. Thus lived
This people when the English dressed in skins
Roamed savage as our negritos, and the howls
Of red men by Chicago's shore were blent
With the cry of wild fowl, and the bark of wolves.
So had we lived forever but for Fate;
Save for that man of Nazareth whose death
Has scourged the world; save for that learning again
Arising as an infant Hercules
Beneficent but mad, unreckoning,
Bringing both good and evil, like the wind
Which speeds the ship, but heaps the ruinous flood
On distant shores, in inlets, and destroys
The toil of fields. This was it which created
The dream of Genoa made of halos and light
From aureate streams of Karazan, which became
One vast mirage filling the whole wide sky
Of kings and popes, until Magellan led
By its seduction hither came. Did he
Seeing our cities, commerce, laws and arts,
The state we had established, and the torch,
Which we had lighted at an ancient altar,
And still kept trimmed and burning, pay respect
To these and us? No! But he showed us war,
Armor and swords and daggers — what are they

But the cross which is knived? And he set up the cross
Amid the burning ruins of our towns
To bend our knees to his idolatry.
He slew us, till a poisoned spear laid low
His enmity. And that is the precurse
And symbol of the intervening years:
The conqueror comes, he slays us — but he dies!
As round the world the dark skin is despised,
And feared, and held inferior, so he
Died for his ignorant hate; and we have died
Since for the skin which Nature gave to us.
Avenging him and for extorted tribute
The Spaniard conquered. First Manila fell,
And all her streets ran blood, her prisons thronged,
Her squares beheld the gibbet. Centuries passed
Wherein we fought back Spain with fierce revolts,
And secret plots, at Bohol, Cayagan.
We followed Tamblot to uproot the cross,
But they destroyed him. Leyte rose in anger,
And Bulacan. Against conscripted labor
And slavery we battled, but they subdued
Us and our cause. Then General Gumapos
Failed and was given a felon's death. Meanwhile
Bribes, offices brought dissension to our arms;
And moths corrupted us, as spies betraying
The rents they ate in freedom's flag: the friars
Hatched in its folds, and then revealed to Spain
Our hope and their devouring. So was broiled
Manila and the Isles two hundred years,
And bled.

But when Napoleon humbled Spain,
And watch fires on the hills of Europe beaconed
Freedom relumed, wherever fell the sparks,
Shielding her eyes Spain granted rights to us.
Yet when Napoleon fell, and from his hand
The dying torch was torn, her word repenting
Spain clamped us once again, and back we slipped
To slavery, taxes, soldiers, parasites.
They conquered Bohol which for eighty years
Had lived the freedom dreamed by great Tamblot;
They crushed Luzon's revolt and shot la Cruz —
For what? Resistance to that sovereignty
Which Spain had forced upon us. Sovereignty!
What is it but the savage lust of cliques?
Flamed by the heroes of America,
England and Italy, then our students rose
But they were crushed, while Gomez and Zamora
Were garrotted.
But Liberty survived,
And would not die in us. It moved the passion
Of Rizal by words of flame to manifest
The sateless friars, who by gradual stealth
Had won our fertile fields, and who conspired
As mercenaries of the state and church
To keep us slaves. Not Buddha's, nor Shantung's
Most holy sage such suet furnishes,
In which devouring life may breed to eat,
And overcome the world as this fat faith
Which offers heaven, and makes this world a hell,
Where property is robbery, and for that

Is murder too.

O, my unhappy country!
Your sorrow is not memory of days
More blest, but that no memory is yours
Save of ill fortune in the anguished years.
When Goth and Vandal bent the knees of Spain
We ruled ourselves. When emir and caliph flourished
The sovereign sword of Bagdad on Granada,
We in this land of sunlight, afar, at peace,
Unenvied, undiscovered, ate the bread
We earned, and made the laws by which we toiled.
So to Magellan's day. Then pestilence
And famine took us. Then perverted books,
And catechisms of a fabled faith
Darkened and starved in friar ridden schools
The children of these isles; until to loss
Of independence and the patriot realm
Was added weakness of the native mind,
And ignorance, and failure of that will
Which merits independence: thus was proof
Forged by the foe, and given the guise of truth
That we were mindless, lawless and unfit
Ourselves to govern.

Yet we stood unvanquished,
Nor wholly darkened. From this prison realm
Heaven's light could not be shut. It streaked between
Jail fissures to the sodden straw where dreamed
Rizal; and Aguinaldo saw
By its illumination on wakening eyes
The truth that men are free, and slaves are fashioned

Not by the hand of Nature, but by thieves.
But seeing did he fail us, did he pass
Like all the rest to failure, but also shame,
Betraying us, after fierce leadership
Which guided insurrection, and shook the fears
Of Spain to promise, freedom, rights, and mend
These centuries of wrong? Did Spain's dull gold,
Paid him to lay down arms, and leave the land
Corrupt his loyalty? Did he use the ransom,
Given him to ensure Manila's hope
Of freedom, happier laws, to serve the whims
And lusts of selfish exile in Hong Kong?
So do we hear. But is it Spanish slander
To slow the people's heart through poisoned ears?
How can I know? But how can I forget
That what Spain promised has been unfulfilled,
While he lives leagues away, disarmed — and drugged,
Who knows? Can these old eyes see not these fields
Tilled once again by slaves, who late were soldiers
Obeying Aguinaldo, and who swept
The Spaniard in their wrath? Now leaderless,
Unranked, and humbled, broken, once again
The puppet of the priest, the weary back
That bears the taxer, these my countrymen
Hope on, and toil and sing, and dream tomorrow.

(*From the surrounding mountains voices in song float over the height where Apolinario is seated.*)

Land of the morning
With fervor burning
Do we adore you,
Hold none before you,
Help us to bear.
Loving you solely,
Land dear and holy
Answer our prayer.

Cradle which guided
The heroes who sided
With death, undivided
In love evermore.
The invader shall never
Our liberty sever,
Or trample your shore.

On your seas and your mountains,
Your fields and your fountains
Shines Liberty's light.
Your banner is flying
Where suns are undying,
To the tyrant replying
With stars which are bright;
Its fields bravely shining
With sunbeams entwining;
Its blue folds unfolding
Before us beholding,
May they never be dimmed.
O, Isles of the Ocean

Our love and devotion
Forever are hymned.

O, Land of the splendor
Of sunlight, O, tender
Loveland, but to lie
In your arms is to capture
All bliss, save the rapture
Of those who defy
Your foes, and who die.

(*Enter a messenger.*)

MESSENGER

Apolinario! Awake! Arise! Rejoice!
Salute the hour!

APOLINARIO

What message do you bring?

MESSENGER

The Philippines are free! Shout! Sing! Be glad!
Join in the anthem of the echoing hills!

APOLINARIO

What is this madness?

MESSENGER

Happiness alone!
Attend the tidings: North America,
The great Republic, having heard too long

The groans of Weyler's victims, wages war
For Cuba's independence, and for us.

APOLINARIO

Is this an inner dream? Whence comes this word?

MESSENGER

From Aguinaldo. He has reassumed
The interrupted task, and calls to us:
Arm! Arm! Assemble! Providence at last
Puts freedom in our hands! America
Extends her magic mantle to our country,
But not to rule us, to despoil, to tax;
Not for her selfish gain, but to uplift us,
To liberate, to aid, as France of old
Gave help to her and Washington. She will strike
The reconcentrado camps, and hew to earth
The gibbets, and tear down the prison walls
Where they stood Rizal. She will dry the blood
Of butcheries, and empty the cruel cups
Of water tortures; she will free and bless.
So Aguinaldo publishes.

APOLINARIO

This will be
When? I am breathless.

MESSENGER

Even now it is.
A squadron of America has dueled

The Spanish fleet to death, and holds Manila
On sea, to bar the fresh access of troops
From Spain. Meanwhile has Aguinaldo come,
Protected by the Great Republic's flag,
Summoned by Dewey to wage the war on land,
And take Manila, made an ally in
The war of North America on Spain,
But for our liberty, the ancient hope
So long delayed. So Aguinaldo calls,
Arise, and where you see the Stars and Stripes
Assemble; for it is lifted to redeem;
It is unfurled in friendship; being at home
The friend of liberty, it must bring to us,
And every land it touches liberty,
The charter of its being is so written.

APOLINARIO

It is so written, but not so observed.

MESSENGER

How say you that?

APOLINARIO

She pillaged Mexico,
Took Texas, California.

MESSENGER

And made them states.

APOLINARIO

Imperially ruled with all the other states.

MESSENGER

She freed the negro.

APOLINARIO

No, she saved the Union
With a Republic ruined.

MESSENGER

You are old;
Old dreams are yours, but vision has bereft you.
Nature is served not only with the eye,
But with the glass which aids it. So with truth,
Which is not seen by mere sagacity,
But deeper, better by the light of love,
And faith which magnify, and reveal to hope,
What the hard lens, dimmed by experience,
Leaves undiscovered. I have faith in man,
In liberty, in America. On I go
To hail the dawn of freedom for these isles.

APOLINARIO

Stay! And before you go unfold all things;
Tell me the story of this year in which
I have been deep in studies from the world,
In contemplation, abstinence and thought,
Removed among these heights from all reports
Of good or evil, having so withdrawn
Myself from the world to quiet memory
Of what our land has suffered, to forget
The death of Rizal, and to think no more

Of Aguinaldo exiled. Tell me all:
When came the fleet of Dewey, and sailing whence?
When rose the war on Spain? And what the cause?
What part has England in this, Germany?
Who says the Stars and Stripes are lifted here
In friendship to these Isles, and not in lust?
Whose promise is it to empty the cruel cups
Of water tortures, and wreck the prison walls,
And dry the blood of butcheries? I have won
The sovereignty of insight by slow pain
And years of knowledge of the ways of men,
And am unmoved by wild and youthful words
Which upward fly at every passing gust.
Tell me these things. But chiefly why Manila,
Not Barcelona nor Madrid became
The point of strategy and force of arms.

MESSENGER

I know the story of the last long year,
And you shall hear it, and by the fiery words
Of Aguinaldo, who with his army stands
Before Manila, guarding an ancient gate,
And there awaits America. Thus he says:
Compatriots! Soldiers! By God's providence
And by your valor, here we stand at last,
Holding this city gate! Within this wall
Lies cooped the craven Spaniard. How as dawn light,
Which moves from peak to peak, has revolution
Swept all these Isles! A little two months since
I rusted in Hong Kong, an exile grieving,

Sent thither by the enemy. Then as lightning
Fate struck. The *Maine* was sunk. America
Heard Cuba's agony, the great Republic
Made swift, victorious war. But half a year
Before America roused was Admiral Dewey
Ordered from California to Hong Kong,
To strike the Spanish fleet here at Manila
If war ensued, which came.
A month ago
For the first his sailors saw these Luzon heights,
And these old forts. At midnight steaming in,
Lights dimmed, his fleet with swiftness glided; all
These forts were sleeping. Then a rocket shot
High through the darkness as the forts awaked,
And over the fleet of Dewey snarled a shell.
He let the challenge pass unanswered, sweeping
With no gun fired toward the Spanish fleet;
Nor did he loose the peril of his ships
Though mines roared tons of water, and these ramparts
Poured shells around him — steadily he moved
Toward the enemy.
Then suddenly
Some old sea-dog of Dewey's crew cried out
"Remember the *Maine!*" And swiftly from ship to ship
The cry leaped like an echo, "Remember the *Maine!*"
And to remember it the *Olympia's* side
Belched fire; and down the Spanish line his ships
Passed, raking them with shot; and passed again,
And passed again, till the bright, sunny air
Of that May morning darkened, and iron bombs

Rattled as hail. The Spanish ships were torn
As deer where lions leap, and Spaniards died
As swatted flies. But no American
Was touched. Not even when Montojo, made
Desperate, took the deadly chance, and drove
His flag-ship straight for Dewey's.
Then ensued
The Spanish ruin, while Dewey on the bridge
Calmly beheld the Spanish flag sink, fluttering
Down to the waves, waver a moment, pass
And disappear. The Stars and Stripes were flying
In the silence which was peace.
To my exile
Came like an ecstasy this great report.
And soon from Admiral Dewey convoy under
The Stars and Stripes, who summoned me to raise
The forces of my old insurgency,
And to be the ally of America
To take these Isles, as he had won the sea.
But ere my exile ended, ere I came
Were you, O soldiers idle, O my brave,
My loyal patriots? No! America
Had not made war on cruel, coward Spain,
Nor we aroused, encouraged for such battle,
When you devoid my leadership approached
Manila, and ten miles from this old gate
Set up your camps; for which within these walls
Was martial law proclaimed by Spanish fear.
All this was written to America;
And the great, brave deeds of March when Bulacan,

Zambales, Camarines, Ilocos Sur
Revolted, and when Cebu fell, besieged,
To your insurgency, these were written too,
And stirred America, and befell before
I hastened hither with that Spanish gold
Paid for my exile, and conserved for you,
For our belovèd land in some event
Of revolution bursting forth again,
Not dreaming that America would come hither
To make its use the advantage that it is
In arming, feeding you, as I have done.
Who helped me in the protection of this fund?
Who drew it for me for this patriot use?
Who bade me Godspeed with it? Who gave blessings
Upon it and on me, and sped this war
Which you have waged and I have led? The Consul
Of America at Hong Kong! For which have faith,
And for the friendship of the Admiral
Draw deep belief in all America
Has done, will do, and in the mighty words
Of great McKinley, the American President,
Who calls it criminal trespass to annex
Cuba by force. We being so far away
Over the vast Pacific, but yet so near
That faith proclaimed for Cuba, need not fear
The will of Washington. These things I say
That when the army of America
Arrives, and you are shouldered side by side
With them, to battle in the common cause
Of beating off the clutch of hateful Spain

You will with hearts of confidence, and acts
Of scrupulous friendship so deport yourselves
That no dissension may arise between
The Philippine Republic and our ally
Out of their soldiers' brawls, or petty quarrels.
Hear and obey.
For look: in one short week
Imus, Bacoor, Las Pinas, Paranaque
Have sounded the battle, which proceeds till now
Mindoro, Mindanao and Bohol,
And all Luzon save the city of these walls,
Are taken by our troops. Soon, too, this city,
Beloved Manila shall be ours; if not
By our sole valor, then by aid of arms
Already from America arrived;
If not by us and them, then by the strength
Of the full battalion, which this very hour
Howls at the vast Pacific to speed them faster.
Keep faith, obey, acclaim them so to prove
We were not made for slavery, we who bore
In fortitude these centuries of wrong;
And who in peace made learning and the arts
Our love and labor. We who have endured
Ruin, humiliation, and have survived,
Are called to greatness, and to a place of worth
Among free nations. Wherefore we have raised
The Philippine Republic; we have made
Wise and just laws to guide these days of trial.
God gives us independence! Not for gain,
Nor empire, but humanity has come

America to aid us; God rewards
Our patience, and our passion to be free
By sending us America, which was christened
In revolution, and by the deathless words
That all men are born free, whatever hue
The brow may be. America has heard
Our lamentations, and has stretched her hand
To lift us up. Her admiral has called us
Friends, aids and allies in the general cause
Of his Republic; and what he has commanded
That have I done, being his friend, as he
Is friend of us. And he has brought us arms;
And he has given me counsel; and he has approved
My plans, because our labors save his troops
Which came to aid us, and these arriving soon
To finish what we fail to finish. Hence
Be faithful in all friendships. Have no fear,
But fight, fight to the end.
The Spanish troops
Behind these walls shall thirst with Pasig shut
To access, and the city's water works
Captured today by us. With Admiral Dewey
Blocking the sea, and we denying them
The exits of these walls we have them grappled
Tight by the throat. My daily conference
With the Admiral will devise the fitting means
For each day's task.... So Aguinaldo spoke.

APOLINARIO

So he trusts this America? And what of you?

MESSENGER

Her acts give me assurance, and the words
Of all her consuls, and even the Admiral.

APOLINARIO

What one has promised us our independence?

MESSENGER

Great General Thomas!

APOLINARIO

Tell me what he said;
What words were Dewey's, what the President's.

MESSENGER

Walk but a distance with me, and I shall.
(*Exeunt.*)

DEWEY'S SAILORS

Across ten thousand miles of sea
We came, preparing
Battle, and bearing
Freedom to captives, and to those who sit
In darkness light.
By the spirit of Jones, of Lawrence and Decatur,
By Narragansett Bay and Lake Champlain,
By Tripoli, Mobile and Hampton Roads,
By the Republic's might,
By Washington, by Jefferson, be the traitor
To Liberty, and the slaver Spain
Deprived these isles of gibbets and of goads.

Down with the Spaniard, down;
Be the cruel cross, the crown,
The bread blood-earned, which others eat,
The want, the ignorance tyrant nourished,
The studied lie which uses what it makes,
Feel to the last lone year this great defeat,
Which man's immortal hope has flourished,
That never more tear falls, or the heart breaks.
Let it be known forever that whoso delves,
And only he, makes earth a realm of brothers;
And those denying liberty to others,
Shall keep it briefly for themselves.

From California's Gulf we crossed the ocean
With gallant Admiral Dewey in command,
To end an ancient wrong upon this land,
And prove what freedom is, and our devotion.
Now armies come from Maine to Minnesota,
From Kansas, Illinois, the East and West;
From old Virginia rise to cold Dakota,
From Kansas swarm to succor these distressed.
To General Aguinaldo freely lending
The strength of our Republic, and attest
Our sympathy with peoples long unblest,
Our love of freedom for which these Islands are
contending.

THE CREWS OF THE GERMAN CRUISERS
IRENE AND KORMORAN

With speeches half seraphic,
Yet all their heart is traffic,

Is business, money changing,
For which their ships are ranging,
Since Perry sailed to Yeddo,
And won the Japanese.
They're after hemp and copra
For churches and the opera;
And money is their credo
In all philanthropies.
They're snake and wolf and cougar
For oil, tobacco, sugar;
They're merchants through and through,
As Hittite, Greek and Jew.
Hooded with trade's uraeus
They'll do what the Castilian
So long has failed to do,
Slick handed, cruel hearted.
But as from the Piraeus
The ships for the Sicilian
Campaign the spirit drew
Of Athens, so departed
America with this crew—
And we are happy too.

THE LADRONES
(*at a distance*)

Manila's heart with joy may throb,
Pirates are we whom none deceives;
These come, as they of old, to rob,
They come as slavers, come as thieves,
As in Magellan's day.

The cross-bones and the skull we fly,
As honest pirates we live and die;
But these for duty and their gods
As killers, swindlers, and as frauds
Are in Manila Bay.

We pirates from the Robber Isles
Hail the ships from the Robber Land,
Which come with soft words, come with smiles,
With handkerchiefs around the hand
To hide the assassin's gun.
They will not carry upon their back
The brown man, having slaved the black;
The Stripes have joined the Union Jack,
The Stars their race have run.
We from the Isles as fierce Ladrones,
The sons of those whose murdered bones
Were strewn at Guam and Seypan,
When fraud and faith and hate began
In mad Magellan's day,
Salute with smiles the Spangled Flag
Which comes to spoil and comes to gag,
And civilize us with the Krag
Here in Manila Bay.

DEWEY'S SAILORS
(*saluting the Philippine Flag*)

That banner newly spun,
Those stars, that rising sun,
Do we in gladness hail.

Boom! Boom! The *Raleigh's* cannon roar;
Boom! Boom! Reply the *Boston, Baltimore;*
Boom! The *Olympia* turns the Spaniard pale —
May Liberty prevail.
Shout over the waters where is born
A nation new! Salute the rosy morn
Which sees a people, a republic rise
Beneath these Oriental skies.
Boom! The *Olympia* makes Montojo quail,
The *Reina Cristina* fail.

Over the darkling, sunlit sea
We bring the faith: no state may be
Save where the ruled agree.
By Yorktown, Gettysburg, by the word
Of Jefferson and Lincoln earth has heard
These cannon thunder that all men
Are equal under God. So be again
That banner newly spun,
Those stars, that rising sun
In exultation hailed.
America, the mother of Liberty,
By her faith which is, which has been, and shall be
Vows that these Isles are free,
And thanks that Providence which has prevailed.

THE CREW OF THE REINA CRISTINA

Stumbled on by Columbus,
Who saw not land but light
Through faith and hunger cumbrous,

And will no fate could spite;
This breed of babiroussa
Of Amerigo Vespucci,
The thrifty grocerman,
And children of the clan
Of Ponce de Leon,
The father of all impostors,
Of hawkers and of costers,
May now do what they can:
From us they catch the plague which
sapped our brawn.

(*Re-enter Apolinario.*)

APOLINARIO

These are but words to trick us, fool our hope!
What is a consul's word? A general's?
An admiral's? What, being double faced?
That they are honest! So the rogue protests.
That they are moved for us by that regard
Which led them to free Cuba. Is she free?
That in these hundred years they have not entered
The world's mad scramble seeking colonies!
What do they call Alaska, or Hawaii
Which Cleveland loosed, and this McKinley will take?
Can they not conquer what we conquered, seize
These isles which Aguinaldo and his troops
Broke from the clutch of Spain? Will fear of the
world's
Censure deter them? Will the hand of shame
Stay them, reflecting what their fate had been

Had France at Yorktown having aided them
Dropped off the mask of friendship, seizing rule
Over their land which England forfeited?
No! For the world in weakness is content
To find fit words for such iniquities,
And there an end.
Why Dewey here at all?
War is it? And to strike the enemy
Wherever he may be, is proper war?
Then was it such in Spain to strike the Spaniard.
Last autumn where were Dewey and his fleet?
Near San Diego. Why? And were these Isles
As near to him as Spain to Hampton Roads?
No! And look back! When was he hither sent?
December! And what saying when he sailed?
That with his *Narragansett* he could capture
Manila. Has he taken it? With Aguinaldo
And all his troops to aid, the Spanish hold
The city yet. But if he had defeated
The fleet of Spain at Barcelona, mark you,
And this had been fast followed by transports
Bearing an army from America
Would that have been good warfare, striking hard
The vitals of the foe? With Spain defeated
Could she have then resisted the demand
To free us, set our Philippine Republic
For Spain's acknowledgment? Thus I expose
The purpose of America.
There is more.
For Washington last autumn looked ahead,

Prepared to take these Isles in case of war,
And ordered Dewey hither speedily
Before war was, or any cause of war,
Or any *Maine* sunk, or any quarrel's occasion,
Save Cuba's age-old agony, known for years.
This day was forecast by America,
And plotted to the full. Through Gettysburg
Becoming what imperialists had hoped
An empire, with authority as such,
She pricked up ears to catch the mystic drift
Of heaven's will. Her worshippers of England
Wanted an Ireland for America —
Which we will be — and now in London feasting
They plot with Tories for the overthrow
Of that America which has rebuked
The lusts and tyrannies of emperors
These hundred years. For by the mocking words
Of hermit nation; and by that doggerel
Which falsifies the burden of white men,
And stands unanswered, lacking apostrophes
To liberty, as savior of the world;
And by the taunt of coward men for shrinking
Before blood shed for spoils; and by renewed
Worship of that Jehovah who gives the strong
The wardship and the rulership of the weak —
By all of these is America betrayed
To spurn, reject her primal faith; by these
Is the world's trend made known to me; by these
Is Cuba's freedom to be recompensed
By taking us, a theft which balances

A gift, which should be given without reward,
Save a good conscience, which has kept the word
That all men are born free. Scorned as he is,
And feared and watched, and planned against, who is
The master spirit of the hour? Why he,
The German emperor! And his brother who?
That Roosevelt who ordered Dewey hither
To take Manila were there war with Spain.
Trust men like these? Trust that McKinley who
Has turned his coat before, whose single thought
Is taxing poverty to gorge the pockets
Of rich exploiters? Trust the cunning breed
Of Hamilton, the relict of dead eras,
The imitator of impostors who
As ministers, economists, and jugglers
Of weights and measures kept the oligarch
Secure, enriched; who turned their backs upon
All Bearers of the Light? Trust these? Not I.
Nor do I trust them to define for us
What honor is, what justice is. No less
They will define it when America
Has conquered us, as conquest will be part
Of that defining; and the rest will be
Dependence as of old, as under Spain;
Lacking the Spanish cruelty, it may be,
The crude drawn blood, but none the less expert
To drain, tax, use us, profit by our toil.
Oh, I am weary, old, heart-sick for all
The misery which men inflict, hope gone,
Seeing that former policy reversed

Which in America gave Hawaii back,
And now will seize it as the first great step
To Guam, whence, first pausing cautiously,
As men do stepping a stream from rock to rock,
She will in season hither plant her foot
Upon these Isles, and fling us who resist them
Into the sea.

(*Enter General del Pilar.*)

DEL PILAR

Venerable man, a drink.

APOLINARIO

Your horse too! Gladly! You are grimed with sweat.
Whence are you?

DEL PILAR

North Luzon. You know me not!
I am Gregorio del Pilar.

APOLINARIO

So young?
And why this horse whose nostrils trickle blood,
Whose fast-pumped sides are smoking?

DEL PILAR

I am summoned
By Aguinaldo for the grand assault
To take Manila.

APOLINARIO

Then America's
Full strength is here?

DEL PILAR

Is disembarking now.
Having such distance covered in these hours
I shall abide a moment, rest my horse,
Then on. What now? A something in your face
Seems half remembered.

APOLINARIO

General, on a time
I too was young, I too had dreams; I too
Fought for this land, for Liberty.

DEL PILAR

I see.
You must be that fierce patriot whose fame
Echoed the past.

APOLINARIO

I am.

DEL PILAR

These many years
Lost to his people. Apolinario!

APOLINARIO

Yes!
There are two kinds of courage, General:
One hastens forward, the other retires and thinks.

Long since I should have left the world. I stood
Fast fighting with the young till Rizal died,
And Aguinaldo failed. Then I ascended
The mountains where my roof of mud might have
A piece of heaven, and call it hope; where thought
Might fly with eagles, and my tomb might be
Nearer the sunrise and the stars. 'Twas here,
And even late a messenger brought me tidings
Of this rekindled revolution. But I
Being old in sorrow, wisdom also named,
Plied questions, and extracted deeper truth,
Which he withheld as valueless.

DEL PILAR

What truth?

APOLINARIO

First this — but not from him — but learned from life:
Tomorrow is a day known by today;
Mist becomes rain, and zephyrs lead the storm;
And next we must endure what fate's to be.
Here I abide the pain of prophecy:
Till rulers be philosophers there will come
No peace for cities, nor the world's repose.

DEL PILAR

The times have summoned Jefferson to rule.

APOLINARIO

No! For Americans are a breed who follow
The mandates of flesh hunger, worldly power.

DEL PILAR

I find no warrant in their law for this.

APOLINARIO

The fact in history is not truth or law;
The Roman or the Puritan is the fact;
Cold fact, compounded of theology,
And greed made subtler by its sophistry
Is this America, which has fashioned God
In its own image, and by worship keeps
The substance of that sculpture unreduced.
Gold may be tried by rubbing it on rocks.
So may a nation boast its freedom faith;
But when it may be given or denied,
That is the rub, and shows the precious ore,
Or vulgar brass. Much have I thought on this.
Truly their Civil War did test the strength
Of a nation to endure in Liberty.
What showed? Brass chiefly! The baser metal streaked
Those granite days, and proved America
A counterfeit, unstamped with Liberty.
Did a new birth of freedom under God
Spring from that war? No! Why not? Even because
The battlefield which heard such noble words
Gave them dead ears, and living ears as dead,
Forgetting that the slaughtered took with them
To the darkness of the grave the truth that states
Derive their powers from free, consenting men;
That truth tear soaked, blood stained, and powder
burned

Was buried with each soldier of the South.
Not in the sky, nor in the ocean's midst,
Nor in the cleft of mountains is there known
A spot where man from any evil deed
Is freed; true too of nations. But O, my heart,
That this envenomed chain should gall our flesh —
Us innocent. How shall it? General, hear:
When the dark issue comes, which I foresee,
McKinley nurtured in the recreant faith
Which from the first has bent America
To the deviate path of privilege, gold and pride,
And disembodied sovereignty which destroys
The hands which made it — this McKinley will
Remove the face cloths from the unknown dead,
And show us — who? Ourselves, done to the death
At Gettysburg! The madness of that battle
Became the city's madness, which has subdued
America and now will take our land.
The stones thrown over shoulder by Deucalion
Earth men to people realms with happy life,
This spirit, madness took to build the cities;
Which being built they are but towers to watch
Laborious vineyards, and are walls wherefrom
To conquer us.

DEL PILAR

Your prophecies are moved
By age and sorrow. I must travel now.

APOLINARIO

Stay but a moment! You do well to hear me.

Even now in London are Americans
Whose quality my genius divines, foregathered
As eagles to the carcass — imitators,
And students in the subtleties of kings,
Who swollen with great dreams of making history,
As it was made by selfish, sovereign spirits
Stand in enchantment, thinking an hour has struck.
Man glories when he sees himself the power
Which shapes and rounds an era. Godlike it is
To be the hand of Destiny. Then man worships
God not as a tender Father, nor as Power
Which rules all worlds and systems, but as partial
Favor which chooses him for ends. Then dreams he
His little soul has width enough to clothe
The future with his being, make his day
The future. So self-fooled that he creates,
As even he does — for evil — he rides down,
Slays and enslaves and calls it God. Now here
Among these mountains, as a man asleep
Dreams that a thief is in the room, did I
Take from the quiet of this upper air
The sound of these far whispers. Suddenly
The messenger confirmed them. What's the secret
Of my divining? Why to conceive, espy,
By looking through steel doors what property
Wants, is preparing for — but that is seen
By entrances, in corridors, while the god
Stands in the central chamber of purest gold;
Stands and remains there all inviolate,
Guarded by dwarfs, who send its magic forth

By occult arts, by ciphers, send but keep it,
Use it but without lessening. Thus all rulers,
All statesmen, ships at sea, all wars and laws
Obey this god not knowing where he is,
Save that the needle of their compass turns
And tells them where to steer.

DEL PILAR

But Liberty
New born rounds out an era — it has been.
If men would shape the world, they may with that.

APOLINARIO

Save that tradition, dynasty are strong;
While Liberty denies them merely, rejects
Their old legitimacy. Gold is the living blood
Which floods the veins of Time, and nourishes
To change and growth, and freedom it may be,
When kindred to its spirit. But behold meanwhile
Two men alone: One seeks events reversed,
And history turned back; the other in hope
Finds rational purpose in man's life, and means
Adapted to far ends. One lives the present,
As it were all, and these who plot our fall
Are of them, even while as priests of God
They mouth great ages shaped; one lives the future
To amend today — Rizal was such and you;
One sacrifices, as America
Devoured the Indian and Chinese; and one
Is sacrificed as you will be, as all

Of us will be in this world tidal wave;
One kills, one dies; one takes, the other gives;
One is McKinley, and one Aguinaldo.
Like men, like states. And where the merchant rules
There will the merchant's justice dominate.
Seeing you here in such great hope and faith —
And what's to be — O, heaven — I am loath
These words to say.

DEL PILAR

Which do not cast me down.

APOLINARIO

And if they did, you still must act your part,
Fight the war through, no less than those who come
First to betray and then to conquer you.
I shall abide here in my mountain hut.
Attend me now: your first dire casualty
Will be the Truth, killed by the giant Lie
Of our unfitness for self-government;
Then Death will join the Lie. Religion, Gold,
And that Hypocrisy which with magic fashions
Its serpent scales to the armor of St. George;
Which charms to angel lineaments the forehead
Of reptile lust, will pray, and bribe and coil.
Then merchants, grabbers, small adventurers,
Swarming like rats over the bloody field
Of a vanquished army, will resort in haste
To nibble at the loot that Spain has lost.

DEL PILAR

It shall not be! But listen! Hear those words!

VOICES

Hail to the land that bore us;
Hail to the days before us,
Which God prepares to brighten
This dawn of Truth and frighten
The ghosts so long victorious
  Throughout the earth.
Republic great and glorious
  Behold your latest birth!
Hail to this flag fresh woven,
By faith and sorrow proven.
Hail to this banner lifted
By countryside, and rifted
  Manila's ancient wall.
Hail orient Republic! Who will haul
  This ensign down, or dare
To blot it from this sunlit air?

DEL PILAR

O my enraptured heart — can you endure?

VOICES

By countless men who perished,
By Gumapos who cherished
La Cruz, and by Novales,
Whose spirit calls and rallies
  Our courage to the end,

Hail, Great Republic, mighty friend!
Hail, soul of Rizal dying
Behind this wall. Our flag is flying
As token of our love enduring,
Our hope beyond obscuring,
  Our will no hate could rend.
Hail, loved Americans! Never hand will haul
  Our banner down, or dare
To blot it from this sunlit air.

A VOICE

Manila's gates are stormed by Aguinaldo;
Americans are mowing Spaniards down.
Rizal's avenged! Let mountain shout to mountain!

DEL PILAR

Now I swoop down to battle. Mount and away!
(*Exit.*)

APOLINARIO

Would that the name of king so near erased
Had by the act which broke the haft,
Shivered the blade, and dulled its craft,
As well its spirit had effaced.
All hail to Jefferson! Who for revolution
Proclaimed those words of flame, alike of worth
For all men's futures, for days of peace as well,
Nor arming only a rising retribution.
All men are sons of him over the wide earth,
Flesh of his flesh, and blood of his blood,

He being their father spiritual.
Would he were now a stumbling-block which stood
Against returning despotism to stay
Pride, lust and hate, which seek to lead astray.
What though our gods are false,
Our brows are dark,
Our vision blinded by the oligarch;
Yet Liberty no less enthralls
With the fire of a birth-born right
Our hearts by heaven endued
With the privilege to rule ourselves, and light
Our way, even thought we miss the good.
Yet if we need an arm to keep, protect
Our infant steps, it well could be
Like Cuba's path, guarded, but free.
Vain hope, such happiness to expect!
Dark days are on us, and for Liberty,
Yes, and for those who the old faith have wrecked!

A VOICE (*from the valley*)

Victory! Victory! Manila's fallen! All
The Philippines are free! Lift up, unfurl
By every village, farm house, rice field, mountain
The Philippine flag!

APOLINARIO

Why so? By us at last
Seduced, bribed, wearied, overawed, to be
Cried down! Weak men are we before this age,
And this Titanic power of soldiers, ships.

Victory is it? And for whom defeat?
That Spain hand of old Rome's half palsied pope,
And us, the fingers, rotting for lack of blood
To be sword hewn to save the friars' lands
For Rome; and so for Rome, though Spain expire,
No loss whatever happen. All this I see.
How now the kaiser growls, how Briton laughs!
How growls he for the monarch principle
Graffed on the huge trunk of America,
Whose branches intertwined with Briton's oak-tree
Will overshadow him. This I divine.
Yes, Briton laughs to see what neither armies,
Nor navies ever did, done now by smiles,
And diplomats, and sudden friendliness
Which held the kaiser while Montojo fell
A prey to Dewey.
Victory is it? Behold
Among the vanquished the great Republic led
Now to unquiet wandering in the world,
And fellowship with empires, having sold
For spurious glory freedom's heritage,
And leadership for justice. This I see.
Now I hear voices from the mighty past.
(*Enter a wounded Spanish soldier.*)

SOLDIER

Father! Admit me. I am sorely spent,
I was your foe, but now must ask your aid.

APOLINARIO

Spain is defeated then?

SOLDIER

We have surrendered;
They routed, overwhelmed us.

APOLINARIO

Who?

SOLDIER

You know —
The Americans.

APOLINARIO

Not Aguinaldo then?

SOLDIER

Yes, Aguinaldo, whom no soul surpassed
In skill, in courage, strength.

APOLINARIO

So then Manila
Is ours at last?

SOLDIER

Is theirs.

APOLINARIO

Is whose?

SOLDIER

America's.

APOLINARIO

And is not Aguinaldo jointly holding
Manila?

SOLDIER

We were saved that last disgrace—
Forgive me, father. When we were outfought,
When slaughter overwhelmed us, our commander
Asked for our honor's sake that Aguinaldo
Be not permitted with his troops to enter
Manila, so to triumph over us.
The Belgian consul won those terms for us;
From the great wreck and ruin of proud Spain
That act of grace was the sole remnant saved.
Your pardon, father.

APOLINARIO

Where is Aguinaldo?

SOLDIER

Some distance from Manila with his troops,
Where he was ordered by the Americans.

APOLINARIO

We profit nothing for Spain lopped! For what
Her sword has lost the crosier still retains,
And for that luck all ancient vultures croak.
Weep not for Spain. Her soldiers lie in death,
But her soul is unharmed. Rather for us
Weep, who for centuries have kept the hope,

The vision, even though broken, dimmer growing,
And now extinguished in this mighty wind
Which comes afar, out of unfathomed heavens.
In wars to free man's life, or fate, or thought,
Defeat leaves broken ends, which the new races
Neglect, forget, mistake; and thus their truth
Stands uncontinued. For even where there's will
To carry on, new needs divert the path,
The goal is not the goal first seen. Men are
As surf rolled to the shore, which by the wind
Are slanted, and by breakers turned awry.
What is that voice?

VOICE (*in the valley*)

A proclamation! Hear!
Peace, Filipinos! To your homes! Lay down
Your arms! America is sovereign over
The Philippines. A proclamation! Hear!
The President of America so ordains.
Submit and to your homes all peaceful men.

APOLINARIO

Did you know this? No matter. Wounded wretch,
Into my hut, and leave me to my thoughts.
(*Exeunt severally.*)

I

Dear loved Manila! Tomb of all we dreamed,
The end is come!
But neither cannon, nor torches comet-streamed,
Nor the battle drum

Has taken our city. No, but the crushing cold
  Coils of insatiate Fate,
  Which soothes but to assimilate
Our strength, our courage with an opiate gold.
  Your castles, houses, walls shall stand;
  While Liberty, our labor and the land
Fall to the spoiler, by laughing Titans doled.

2

Where is now the soldiery
Of citizens at Lexington,
That army of men free,
Who followed Washington?
Where are they? Gone, all gone!
Mad conquest and its wars
Call forth the regulars,
And they are here
The merchant to sustain:
As Mexico saw Spain,
As once the Arab spear
Defeated Aquitaine.

3

Where are the senates which could be
Bent not to an Augustan skill
To abdicate the sovereignty
With which they could fulfill
The mission of its source, a people's will?
Where are they? Passed away!
So to McKinley of the double word
Are given the law, the purse, the sword

With which to rule us, tax and slay.
And we so wounded, so aggrieved,
So weary, so deceived
Crouch down, obey.

4

Hear on these winds the curses blown
Of Kansas and New England troops,
From gun-boats and from sloops,
And to the rattle of the krag
The hate pronounced: pock-marked ladrone —
Kill, kill him! By the Starry Flag
Redeem him from Mahomet's error;
Be Buddha's faith chastised,
The wisdom of Confucius struck with terror
By the sword in the hands of Christ.
Hear the apostate Truth unlearn
Its creed, and as the renegado curse:
Make Samar still as death! Kill! Kill! Burn! Burn!
Heap high the dead! I want no prisoners!
Rebellion choke with water till it burst;
Rebuild the camps and reassemble
These Malays, Tagalogs, where thirst
And hunger may make treason tremble.
Exterminate! Be bloody Waterloo,
Be Antietam, Gettysburg
Tame as a fight of wrens, till blood bedew
Mountains and rice fields: as the huge simurg
Thrice saw the world's rewritten epitaph,
Placed on the world destroyed;

Thrice, too, flapped wings to safety overjoyed
From its eyrie in far Kaf.
Beloved Manila! All things are but repeated:
As Spain stood Rizal by the wall,
And would not let him face the firing squad,
So are we by like cruelty defeated;
So are we, as he was made criminal;
So as they tracked and tricked him, do these track
And trick us; so for both in praise to God.
Like him as well they shot us in the back.
But as white flags of peace and truce
Betrayed our hope, there yet may be
White covered hands which will abuse
An hour from danger seeming free.
Some Spirit of an intermittent power
Wakes, and with irony re-writes the hour.
(*Enter a messenger.*)

MESSENGER

Who's here? Awake!
(*Re-enter Apolinario.*)

APOLINARIO

What would you? What's the news?

MESSENGER

Three thousand Filipinos have been killed.

APOLINARIO

Three thousand! And by whom?

MESSENGER

The Americans!

APOLINARIO

What brought the battle?

MESSENGER

First was bitterness
Because our troops were miserably denied
The honor of their flag in triumph borne
Along Manila's streets when Spain surrendered.
Next was the proclamation of McKinley
Which set his army sovereign over us.
For this was followed by a curt, sharp order
From General Anderson to Aguinaldo,
Saying, remove your troops beyond the lines
By which I hold Manila — do it now,
Or I shall force you.

APOLINARIO

Thus to an ally said!

MESSENGER

Or what was such. But Aguinaldo obeyed.
'Twas not enough. An order came again,
Withdraw your lines. And Aguinaldo did,
He wanted peace, and hoped against bad days
That peace being kept our independence fared
With better chances with America,
Which now with silence or double words or scowls

Treated our patience, longing, nervous words
Which asked, What's up? Our army prayed, all prayed,
And Aguinaldo, del Pilar — they prayed,
And scanned the bulletins of the fierce debate
Which tore the American senate, where Hoar spoke
For us against the treaty —

APOLINARIO

Treaty?

MESSENGER

Conveying
Us and our country to America.
To keep the peace was clearest gain for us,
To be all patience, honorable, wisdom's course,
Seeing two votes were needed in the senate
To ratify the treaty, assailed and loathed
By senators, and by Americans
Of highest worth; among them was that Schurz,
Son of a hoped millennium, turned to dust;
Which seeing it so he cursed: — this double-tongued
McKinley grown a rascal, and meriting
All men's contempt.
These two votes might be lost
To us by splashing blood, and gained for them —
You see, that's clear. But when they moved our troops
Back without blows, and moved us back again,
And then no strife, some other means were needed
To get the blood with which to drive to cover
Amid the trumpetings of patriot wrath

Those senators who stood for the faithful creed
Of America, and so standing stood for us.
So now was no man's land, a full wide mile
Between our troops and the Americans.
There did a Kansas or Nebraska sentry —
Nebraska it should be, since Bryan wrought
Our woe above all men, who cried, adopt
The treaty, then by law give independence
To the Isles! — give Bryan but an epigram,
And like a boy armed with a painted bow
He'll hunt for lions by the lilac bush —
Well, then this sentry halted one of ours,
Who called back, Halto. The American —
So he has said — conceived somehow 'twas good
To kill our sentry — whence that strange idea?
And so he shot our sentry. Quickly then
They killed another Filipino sentry;
And that was blood, but not the kind. At last
Our soldiers fired — and there was blood, right blood.
Thus our two votes were lost, our chance wiped out,
Which yet to save, our General Aguinaldo
Showed that our firing was not authorized
By him, apologized — but the word came back,
No quarter now; McKinley, too, proclaimed
No parley and no pause for those thus turning
Upon the flag protecting them, which has freed
Their land from the oppressor; forward arms
Till every rebel be suppressed and hails
The sovereignty of America!

APOLINARIO

The worst's to come.
We being proven barbarous and unfit
To rule ourselves, blacks the world's pedigree,
And heaven's goodness. But if America
Is shown to be uncivilized, what is left?
McKinley, Root and Lodge and Roosevelt
May do these murders — that's their private score.
But if America gives degrees, acclaim,
Wealth, office, love and friends, rewarding thus
Such blood, and for democracy betrayed;
And to those men who stood for liberty
Hatred, contumely, ruin, oblivion,
Who will uplift America, and what flag
Shall stay the oppression of such savagery? —
The world needs neither trade, nor spoils, nor ships
So much as truth, good will, and happiness —
Well, then you're here.

MESSENGER

Preceding those who fly.
So came the battle. We to twenty thousand
In trenches and block-houses fought our best;
And here again some symbol, for we made
A regiment of Nebraska our objective;
Meanwhile the *Charleston* and the *Concord* shelled
Our troops, and the *Monadnock* too. Gun-boats
Plied us with Gatling guns — and how we fell!
What anguish, terror, groaning, as of the world
Butchered in martyrdom went up! We crouched

Like cats; we fought, though overwhelmed;
We turned to thugs, to murderers; we went mad
With hatred, greed of life; we saw around us
Live men with skulls blown open, men who ran
With feet cut off; we saw intestines bulging,
Held in with shaking hands; men without mouths,
Or jaws, or faces; men with chattering teeth
Clamped on ripped arteries that spurted still;
Men without hands, men blind, men asking death,
And countless men in fields and trenches lying
Sown happily in death.
But, O, my heart!
Still do I see that Filipino youth
Who bore our flag, a flag of radiant silk,
On whom a mad American fell like a beast,
And after a sharp struggle beat the boy's
Poor brains out, as I looked. So we fought on;
We cried, "Death to the tyrants, endless war,
War without quarter to these deceiving beasts,
These false Americans!" Naked Igorots
Stood by our side, and fought with spears alone
Against the Gatling guns. But soon they captured
Manila's reservoir, Juan del Monte,
All our block-houses, and held a line at last
From San Pedro Macati to the Bay.
Thus we were routed. But Aguinaldo still
Resolving battle massed his troops again
Near Caloscan, and there the volunteers
From Kansas and Montana ruined us.
Through bamboo thickets, rice fields then we fled

Before the water torture and the torch
Which fired the villages. For the Spanish soldiers
Have been along the years but yelping wolves,
While these Americans hunt or spring and kill
With that blood madness of the tiger which
Sees nothing but the foe. And this for what?
For sovereignty — what's sovereignty? And the flag!
O my poor ruined land!

APOLINARIO

Where's Aguinaldo?

MESSENGER

Would that I knew.

APOLINARIO

There may be hell for such
As these; there may be God who cannot rule
The world; there may be devils who are princes
And rulers of the world; and men may reason
Whether this life be evil or be good
In the ultimate sum of days here or beyond;
But none may controvert this arithmetic:
There are more evil men than good; and these
Make evil victorious, and will keep it so
Till good men are more numerous than the bad.
The good has no divinity which curbs
Bad men against their interest. This has been,
Will ever be, and is despite all gods.
Our consolation has the taint of hate:

It is that law which links cause and effect
So firm that all the frost and rain of Time
Rust not the bond. But for us of this day
All now is lost, as I beheld ahead.
Now to my hymns for solace.
(*Exit.*)

MESSENGER

Alas for me!
Alas for this worn patriot that I came
With such bad tidings.

THE PHILIPPINES

When the moon of Mahomet
Shone sick, and for Karma
The Hindoos to calm it
Found Java and Burma;
When T'ang nourished art,
From the conqueror's pennon
We fled here apart
With compass and cannon.

From the Hindoos, Chinese
We brought through Illana
Ships and ways of the seas,
And the hope of Nirvana;
Silk, cotton and looms,
Books, paper, and golden
Wheat, fruit, and the blooms
From a day that was olden

When the English with woad
Their bodies were streaking;
When the Indian abode
Where Chicago is shrieking;
For a thousand years ere
The Spaniard subdued us,
We were owner and heir
Of a life which renewed us.

To contend with Castile,
And the plagues of Pandora,
La Cruz rose to heal,
Rose to free us Zamora;
Spain bled like the leech,
She sucked like the weasel,
Till we rose to the speech,
And the passion of Rizal.

By the priests and by Spain,
By gibbets and fires
Subdued, our domain
Devoured by the friars;
Half fed and half taught,
After cycles of trial
We rose and unwrought
Our freedom's denial.

In the hour of our hope,
When the darkness was falling
When the king and the pope
Fought a fight unavailing,

Your Republic in fraud
Of our love and assistance,
Our strength overawed,
And broke our resistance.

PORTO RICO

If their right was their might,
Now their right is injustice;
They have armies to smite,
They have ships where their lust is.
They may gather all in
Till their hunger be sated;
They shall lose as they win,
Being deathlessly hated.

CUBA

As wolves clothed as sheep
To betray our reception,
To free not, but keep,
They came with Deception.
They are rulers for trade,
And for trade truth forsakers;
And as merchants they made
The law for the takers.

NICARAGUA

For our own weal to strive
Is the labor not trying
Enough that they rive
Our land with their buying?

Enough that they come
For their banks, with intention
To strike freedom dumb
With their false intervention?

BRAZIL

For the ruin of crowns
We gave blood and treasure.
Now we shrink from the frowns
Of a lust without measure;
Now we see how the boot
Of the Yankee was planted
For Iberian loot,
For an amity granted.

ARGENTINE

With false scales in hand,
With tongues apt to libel;
With statesmen who stand
For conquest, the Bible,
We behold them as foes
Who foment revolution,
And feed on the woes
Of worn resolution.

MEXICO

Costa Rica deplored,
And Haiti lamented,
We shall sharpen our sword
Which their strength has prevented.

Though the cactus conceal
The rattler where oil is,
So shall fangs bite the heel
Of the robber where spoil is.

We are wronged, but at last
They shall pay for our sorrow;
They shall balance our past
With a dreaded tomorrow,
From a spirit of wrath,
From a heart of hostility,
They shall come to a path
Of their race's sterility.

When the popes shall not feed
On a dead superstition;
When trade shall not breed
Through a fabled tradition.
When the land shall belong
To the labor which tills it,
And the parasites' wrong
Shall die as God wills it.

CHINA

From our dreams and our peace
By their thefts and their fables,
Roused as rats to increase
On their hawsers and cables,
Where their ships have been docked
For our wrong unexampled

We shall swarm who were mocked,
We shall fight who were trampled.

For Confucius despised,
For the Flag of the Tiger,
With the breeds tyrannized
By the Nile and the Niger,
We shall join in the war
That their Christ shall be broken
For his conquering Star,
And the hate they have spoken.

JAPAN

Though we have sprung too
As a beast that is terrible;
Though we aped them, and slew
In a crusade unbearable;
In that day when the tint
Of the skin is the issue,
We may fight without stint
For the flesh of our tissue.

In a brawl that is brewed
Out of trade and its quarrels,
Where baseness is good,
And smallness is morals;
With bombs from the sky,
And with ships under water,
To bleed white the lie
With an idiot slaughter.
(*Enter Aguinaldo.*)

MESSENGER

General!

AGUINALDO

General?

MESSENGER

What? —

APOLINARIO

Sir, what? —

AGUINALDO

Yes, now behold me!

APOLINARIO

I do behold you —

AGUINALDO

Stripped of honor, hope,
Of life, perhaps, of country — well —

APOLINARIO

Oh, me!
Then I am stripped likewise. What can I do?

AGUINALDO

Receive me in your hut as my asylum
Where once again I may collect my thought,
And find the way.

APOLINARIO

This messenger even now
Has told me all. But you may yet relate
The inner secret of this change of front.

AGUINALDO

May I abide here for a space?

APOLINARIO

Most welcome!

AGUINALDO

I am a fugitive. For though I've given
My best self, spirit, faithfulness, my all
To this loved land, and for its liberty,
Its happiness, yet do I stand this hour
Amid barbed wires where the live current runs
With news around the world to furnish stuff
For history, and write me down for men
A criminal. Nor am I civilized
If these Americans are civilized.
No! But you ask the secret. It is this:
Hemp, sugar, and tobacco, spices, wood,
Trade in a word for Magellan America.
Their highest men have said so. Thus they said:
Set all the Islands free, unless they be
A benefit to us. Abandon them
To independence, and each other's throats.
So had they done not finding the islands rich
In soil, in fruitful fields, and even gold;

They found them so. Then duty, destiny,
God, altruistic purpose rose to sway
Their policy.

APOLINARIO

In chief McKinley?

AGUINALDO

Yes!
By his own words it was not Hay in London,
So warmed and won by England's sudden smiles
Over his course and his uplifted foot
To be set where he stood at first, and more
Acclaim and friendship for him if he put it
Where he has put it by this treaty — no,
Not this that won him! Nor the German fear
Over their doubled power, being now at one
With England in world policy — no, not this!
Nor was it Lodge and Roosevelt, who began
Before the war with Spain to look ahead
To what is now, and by all stratagem
To win him first to Porto Rico, then
To Guam, to the "large policy," which
They both desired — not this. Nor was it Rome,
Which sensed the temper of our barbarous race,
Loosed suddenly to freedom and reprisal
Of long abuse, by seizing back the lands
Which friars in these centuries had forestalled
For their monopoly — not this. For Rome
With just a Jesuit, ill-wishing smile

Might have forborne our Philippine Republic,
So long as the vexed friar lands were saved.
Not so with Methodists. They coveted all
These Isles — for Christ! And as the Wesleyans,
And all the howling hosts of heavenly grace
Scoffed General Washington, and tied his hands,
So have they me, and fixed the libelous word
Of rebel on us. They bring us happiness!
How? Why, protection of the Wesleyan laws.
Our duty they point out! And what is that?
Obedience to those laws. Their creed is this:
Be bloody for a moral's sake. Give thirst
The cup of gold — with poison! Turn the will
Into the sovereignty of law! Forget
Mercy and reason truth, and call it God.
Show first the handle of the sword: the cross!
If it be unrespected use the point.
This is their history.
So to McKinley,
Rubbing his legs, half-tripping him, with squeals
And grunts for corn, gathered the pious swine.
He pacified them with most succulent news,
Which was he had been praying, he had taken
Our matter to the Lord in prayer! Oh, yes!
Night after night he walked the White House floor;
Night after night he knelt in prayer. And then
One night the prayer was answered: Take them all,
Take all the Isles, and lift them, civilize them,
Make Christians of them; by the grace of God
Do all for them which man for his fellow man

Can do, as they are the fellow men of us,
For whom Christ died! Thus said the Lord to him,
Thus said he said. So having heard the Lord,
What Wall Street wanted needed to be heard;
So to Wall Street he went in conference.
Wherefore the treaty followed; then for seals
They took our sentry's blood; to give it effect
They thus have slaughtered us.

APOLINARIO

O, mind of man!

AGUINALDO

Then echoing him, did senators, the press
Behold America a master genius
To bring in system in the place of chaos,
And light for darkness, law for anarchy,
And thrift for waste, and peace instead of war,
And where false gods have stood the reign of Christ!
Divine America and mission all divine
To be made warder of peace and righteousness,
And trustee of world progress! Glory eternal
To those who seek God's kingdom first, to have
Trade to them added! Reward of heaven itself
To them who have been faithful a hundred years
With the five talents of self-government,
And who now hear the Master's words of praise,
And high appointment to the greater task:
Rise, faithful servant, rule the Philippines!

APOLINARIO

Such words will be not, nor stir the ruffled reason
Of the killer and the thief to justify
His private act by what this nation did.
Denied such argument, then his hate will fester,
His venom deepen, teased by such illogic
Which builds McKinley arches, and him the jail.
Hate, lust, injustice, greed and crookedness,
Sown thus by this example will sprout thick
In all the alleys of disinherited men,
To be fought back by crime-commissions, courts,
In vain with this great crime spawned here to breed
Such natural offspring! While fixed liberties,
And liberal procedures will be wrecked,
Discarded in the terror of the hour
Which needs, it thinks, and summons Dracon's code.
So have republics perished along the way.
What wrought their fall? Their own corrupted hearts,
Too weak at last to rule themselves, become
Faithless over the few things. They are so
Not using, keeping bright their freedom faith,
But now discarding it to rust, become
The sluggard steward, unworthy to be given
The greater riches. Is the fanatic less
Who slays for God, than these who slay for God?
I would bring back the Persian and the Greek
Who if he wanted vengeance, so avowed,
And took it. If he wanted trade or land,
Or cities, seized them for himself, not God;

Who bought no islands, and if buying them
Dreamed not to buy allegiance, nor killed men
Who disaffirmed the bargain never theirs.
What is our solace then who are put down
Irrevocably, and by religion, trade,
Are silenced, since theirs is a censorship
Which makes an index of forbidden causes,
And boycotts with the power of gold? I ask
What is our solace? This, the precious nectar
Distilled from finest judgment, fairest truth,
Which you shall drink with Kossuth—

AGUINALDO

Nathan Hale,
Say rather.

APOLINARIO

Some one approaches! To my hut!
(*Exit Aguinaldo. Three Filipino officers enter.*)

FIRST OFFICER

We seek for General Aguinaldo, friend.

APOLINARIO

Who are you?

SECOND OFFICER

Insurgent officers, who have come
For orders how to carry on the work
Of revolution, now that fate compels
The general's seclusion.

AGUINALDO (*re-entering*)

Orders? Whence
Have you come here?

THIRD OFFICER

Through many weary miles,
Through many tangled jungles which we chopped,
Through many dangers, by insurgents fed,
And guided here —

AGUINALDO

And this for what?

(*Enter General Funston with a force of American soldiers.*)

FUNSTON

To end
Your treason! Seize him!

(*Aguinaldo is overcome by the soldiers.*)

Put him in chains!

(*Aguinaldo is manacled.*)

To Manila's prison with him!

APOLINARIO

To his glory!

FUNSTON

No glory, nothing, silence! Little traitors,
Small, goggled dreamers, weaklings still may quack
In back halls to themselves of liberty,

This is the Kansas answer, loud enough
For senators who talk of shabby wars.
Look at him! Shamed! Silent! Without a tongue!

APOLINARIO

Who is there here to know his words but I?

FUNSTON

Take that old man! No! Down to Manila's prison
With this pock-marked, vile, treacherous Tagalog.
(*Exeunt all but Apolinario.*)

APOLINARIO

Fool is he who would hinge
To God's act God's revenge;
That God first let this roaring yokel tipsy,
With a sailor-boy's cap on head,
As a thug his hands dye red,
Yet aught incur, save infection from the gypsy;
Which in the years to come of work and brawn
He may purge forth from veins,
And swagger without stains,
Blotches, or any palsy for his spawn.
Fool likewise is he who would curse
America or Spain to payment worse
Than Destiny for all things brought to Babylon;
Nor ever Jehovah, showing his hind-parts
Took hand in — save to look thereon
Before and after with prophetic arts.

Destiny is a river fed
By rain, springs at the fountain's head,
The melted glacier and diverted streams.
That which corrupts it with yellow mud
Sinks, streaks away; again the current gleams,
And waves dance in the crystal flood.
Again man's offal through its shores descend;
Boats rotted, wharves deserted speak the end;
Sick generations of defeated men
Forget the Sea that makes all clean again.
When flame swooped from the skies and thunder growled
Man cowered, but the Infinite Ocean then
Rose and refreshed the waters city-fouled.

Blood of the millions on this poor earth poured
To make the earth not center, but the sun!
That truth might well have been without the sword,
Proven, and never slaughter done.
Now knowledge pursued for power,
And duty self-thrust saying we dare not shirk it,
Make this, our fitful hour
Irrational, displacing truth pursued
For beauty, for the good.
Will power achieved turn good, and range the self-same circuit?
Emerged to boundless thought,
From where a little lore was taught
By the whispering Ilissus, man passed to strife.
He left the garden plot, the hill,

The doorway, and the lane of flowered life
For the Mississippi of the electric mill;
Winning instead far solitudes,
Blue polar ice, and jungle woods,
New continents, but neither paradise nor peace;
Nor rest, nor final fate,
Nor larger love save with a larger hate,
Nor any path, once dark, made clear and straight.

Well, some say gathering speed
The earth-born column freed
To wander forth and be the towering city;
Some say that on this march
The capital became the arch,
Where amorous Zeus was not, but a God of pity;
Some point to the lyre and flute
Now by the horn and saxophone made mute;
Some to heart-hidden secrets now displayed,
Instead of wars and Homeric panoramas,
Lauding above these the tale of one heart betrayed,
The fine wrought stuff of spiritual dramas;
One faith uplifted, or one love unmade —
So pointing say the world has gained,
Has climbed, and still is climbing nearer God;
Which granted there remains and has remained
The mystery of truth so hard attained,
And why the cross, the ruler's rod
Fit, as if made for them, the hands of Fraud.
I might not choose the stare
Of the Apollo Belvedere

Over the seamed and troubled brow of Moses.
But for my own life's sake I can
Look not upon the face American
Without foreboding — which so much discloses
The hard, obdurate features of ancient Rome,
Re-sculptured, and by Fate re-rising from the tomb,
Fashioned of hunger which has come
From no one hope, belief or prototype,
Or blood original, but has sprung
Full grown, before the soil is ripe,
Mature before its time, yet young,
Yet old, as well, from old bloods interfused.
Nor can I see the cities freedom-grown,
By trade's Medusa so stared on and abused,
Now turned to pitiless, unresponding stone —
Without the fear that never her snaky locks
Will bring the wingèd-steed, the disdaining hoof
To charm the fountains from the rocks,
And give the land, made wise, and glad, serene,
Song of triumph and reproof,
And the waters of a healing Hippocrene.
I would behold a glorious
Future out of the city victorious
Over the village and the land;
But now its will is gold, its lust is ruinous
Upon the little peoples; its command
Subdues old wisdom, calling them spurious.

But most I would see solved
All freedoms — love evolved;

And for this bear hard laws, and life's decay repeated;
And though for Aguinaldo now I grieve
Somehow I yet believe
That Liberty staggered, rallies undefeated.
Treasures and truths I see,
Which ruined Rome left on a dispeopled shore,
Then came to us. By an all-creating Mind?
No less I am persuaded by this lore,
Though age and these fast tears make blind,
The Philippines in season will be free!

O powerful America, we pause
Broken, but for this age-old cause;
By your injustice to eternal memory lifted;
By your self-broken laws;
By strength which woos no will, and the sick heart
overawes;
By the trumpet which summoned a world, and now
is rifted.
We stayed and beaten, as a pilgrim halted,
Measure the height to which you are exalted.

Ácoma

Argument

Ácoma, the City of the Sky, is located on a mesa nearly four hundred feet above the level of the desert valley, in New Mexico, 60 miles west of the Rio Grande, and about 90 miles from Albuquerque. In 1519 when Cortéz visited Mexico he heard wonderful stories of the seven cities of Cibola, far north, where the roofs of the houses were made of gold, and the doorways were framed in emerald. But it was not until 1540 that Coronado's expedition penetrated to this fabulous country. Of this colorful band of intrepid explorers Hernando de Alvarado was one of the leaders, and he, with his men, were the first Europeans to look upon the City of the Sky. Passing the enchanted mesa, itself an object of magical loveliness and changing color, the crag of Ácoma greeted their astonished eyes, with its overhanging sandstone walls, its gashed and splintered crags, its colossal pillars and forbidding caverns. As it was then so it is now: the city itself, the rows of adobe houses on top of the Rock seem at a distance like a part of the natural stone; and only as the traveler draws near does he see the ladders placed to reach the terraces of these Indian dwellings, and the roofs of human habitation. Alvarado found the cross here as a symbol or object of reverence; and in time the creation myths and the religion of the Ácomites were deciphered. The Spaniards discovered that these Indians believed in a god of virgin birth named Montezuma, who had gone away promising to return and help his people;

that they had a flood myth, and that they believed that men first emerged after the flood from an earth door called Si-pa-pú. These beliefs are sufficiently set forth in the poem without other explanation than this.

Alvarado did not win the confidence of the Ácomites. The beginning of tragedy for the Indians, who were Sun worshippers, and have remained so to this day, was set on foot. In 1580 the Rock was again visited by the Spaniards; and in 1598 Juan de Oñante, after great difficulty and against bitter opposition on the part of the Indians, scaled the Rock with cannon, and after a desperate battle and the death of 500 Indians, conquered the City of the Sky. But it was outwardly only, though the Indians submitted to the Catholic rites and discipline. At heart they were spiritually aloof, and continued their dances and songs, their mysteries of the kiva and their worship of the Sun. About the middle of the 19th century trouble arose between Ácoma and Laguna, an Indian pueblo 19 miles distant, over a picture of Saint Joseph, which had been given to the church of Ácoma by Charles II of Spain. This was loaned for its miraculous properties to Laguna, whose crops and falling birth rate needed a talisman. When Laguna refused to return the picture the priest of Ácoma caused lots to be drawn, and Ácoma won the Saint again to be hung over the altar in Ácoma. Then the picture disappeared, Laguna had stolen it. At this point I have departed from the history of the picture and the feud over it. In point of fact the controversy was now taken to the Federal Court at Santa Fé, where after a hearing the picture was adjudged to Ácoma.

The æsthetic refinements of these Indians; their adoration of the cloud and the rainbow; their chants to the winds, the corn, the Sun; their wonder-working imagination, which leads to clan formation and the naming of clans after

animals, such as the Clan of Antelopes, which is distinctive of Ácoma; and their awe and reverence of the snake with Æsculapius — these and many other things make these Indians objects of peculiar interest to anyone who sympathizes with a people whose constant thought is beauty. These things, too, I trust justify the use of a Greek form in setting forth a tragedy which is essentially true to the life of this people in their unavailing struggle to live and to keep their worship of the Sun.

Ácoma

Characters
OF THE POEM

Zetucupan, a cacique

Jesuphe, his daughter

Eagle Chief, his son

Clan of Antelopes

Father Martinez, priest of Ácoma

A Sun Priest A Koshare

A Lieutenant of the American Army

THE SCENE *is in the court in front of the house of Zetucupan at Ácoma. Jesuphe is sitting in the*

doorway. Zetucupan approaching from the left pauses to apostrophize the Sun.

ZETUCUPAN

I

O, beautiful valley! O peaks afar!
And this shell-tinted sky of dawn!
O, snow upon the mountains, and morning star
  By the morn withdrawn,
To which the smoke of ovens and of fires
  From this City of the Sky ascend,
This Rock which is the altar, as our desires
  Are, single in worship, faithful without end
To you, Bright God, of fiery brow,
Half lifted above the purple pinnacles,
Diffusing from your foot-stool even now
Light on the waking earth, which sentinels
The day, and with the crowing of the cock
Awakens Ácoma! O, Living Sun,
Warrior and god of this ancestral rock,
Whereon your arrows tipped with silver and gold
Are shot as soundless hail, whose course is run
As shattered lightning, or as manifold
Green, purple, blue and bright vermillion;
Or to our caverned cistern gray with wraiths
Of drifted darkness, and where the last star yet
Its wonder bathes,
Are sent as lances thrown, in equal gleams
Through clefts of every rocky minaret,

Which the ashen silence of the pool, nor the dreams
Of grottoed trance disturb — O Living Light,
Our god of fields, of rain, of streams,
Of birth, and who from death redeems,
Be praise now for the vanished night!
Hear us who pray, and may the morning smoke
Which breaks our fast, and speeds
This voice, your love evoke,
Your heaven reach;
And may its odor which pleads
For help assist this broken speech
For Ácoma which bled and bleeds.

2

Long centuries which no knotted cord
Could count, O Light, O Lord
Were we not happy and at peace?
The Spaniard out of the East
Marched hither, and climbed up
This rock enforced our knees
With the stake, the sword, the priest;
And to our lips compelled the servile cup.
There by the needle cliff our fathers died,
There by the dizzy wall,
Where now are colored ribbons and corn ears tied
For honor and memorial
Of the guard, and those beside
Him falling, stern, heroical.
Our city burned and leveled we built again;
Our labor taxed, we paid the debt;

Our worships maimed, we lifted still the strain,
And danced as men whom gods impersonate.
O Sun, help Ácoma to forget!
Give us such beauty that the hate
Of this day and the ages will be as rain
Falling amid your light, or gloom
On which the rainbow's skein
Is woven like a cactus bloom.

3

O, Sun, this city of the mesa land
Bless, which on the illimitable desert looks!
Strengthen its fortress house; and stand
Generous by its cistern and its brooks
Afar that water its corn and melon tilth;
And on these doorways pour
Forever your golden spilth.
This eyrie of eagle spirits who adore
The bowl of cunning workmanship, the sound
Of flutes, the sacred dance, and colored plumes,
And metals, turquoise, wool and looms,
With which the city is crowned
Pray for long days to live, to last
Long as the vanished past,
Back to creation's day when you
Looked down on Si-pa-pú,
And the first people laughing from the vast
Emerged, and we climbed hither to this view,
This safety, Ácoma on high,
This City of the Sky!

4

Now to the dance, the sound
Of drums and gourds;
Now to the kiva underground,
To the feast, the hoards
Of mescal, tuna wine.
The revelry begin on this divine
Altar of heaven, the shrine
Of you, O Sun, the Lord of lords.
(*Exit.*)

JESUPHE

What evils have not smitten Ácoma
Since Montezuma vanished, whose virgin mother
Saw on a day a ball of colored plumes
Floating before her, and taking them within
Her bosom hid them? Thence the god conceived
Sprang at his birth full grown, and armed to help
The Indian people, and to teach them arts,
Worships, and love of children, kin and friends.
But why he left us, though with promises
Of quick return, who knows? Or if he sailed
Far to the East in a barque of serpent skins,
As we believe, I wonder. But so it was
When Cortéz landed on this Western World
His white face dazzled all the Indian folk
Who took him for the god. How much deceived
Were they! He was a devil, devils were all
The white men since. Nor has the god returned.

But in his stead the sword came and the cross,
On which God's son was slain, but treading death
Rose and to heaven vanished, after words
That he would return to men, but burn the world,
Saving his own.
Meanwhile our people wait
Some god's great coming. We wait with many ills.
We on this Ácoma, with our little land,
Some weary miles beyond, of squash and corn
Endure, beholding how the white man plots
To take our dwindling heritage, making laws
Which rob us, and expose us to the fate
Of want, disease; till being a vanished race,
The plain, the hill-side and such mesa heights
As this may yield him silver, being his;
And gold and oil and grazing, being his.
This do they, and their saviour god gives aid
Through laws against our worships, even while
Devotions forced upon us in this church
Our rulers fatten. Thus they pick our bones.
Food, houses, bowls and blankets, silver rings,
Our wealth, have come from labor, nor has come
From any talisman; from yonder Sun
Descend upon us. Our laughing children too,
Many and bright-eyed owe their sturdy limbs
To this sweet air of Ácoma, and the food
Wrung by our toil from nature. Nothing thrives
Through the picture of Saint Joseph in the church.
Yet otherwise Laguna thinks, and dreams
Her better days of the picture borrowed hence,

Her poorer days with the picture here returned
Due to its magic. But I skeptical
Have done a dreadful deed, or brought to pass
Dread days by something done in innocence
Being done in love. I listened to the plea
Of my lover Thunder Bird, Laguna's son;
Who for his city never gave me peace,
But hunted me with never-ending pleas
To help him get the picture for his city.
Then as I called to mind that peacefully
The saint was brought to Ácoma before,
By drawing lots decided, could not foresee
Armed strife today about it, yielded to him
And helped him loot the altar. So we met
Below the needle cliff, and climbing up
Entered the church, and from the altar's place
Took down the saint. Swiftly he stole away.
No friendly words of Father Martinez,
Nor drawing lots bring back to Ácoma
The picture now; but suddenly in wrath
The Clan of Antelopes have armed and gone
Upon Laguna the picture to retrieve,
And my beloved brother is of them.
Nor could I stay him lest I might betray
Where stands my heart in this, if chance had been
To hang upon him before he marched away
In the night. Should he be slain, for so I dreamed,
I am the cause; or if my lover fall
Where shall I turn? And to this sorrow heaped
If my secret leaked what should I suffer then?

Exile from Ácoma! And there's the child
Which quickens in me. Here my father comes!
(*Enter Zetucupan.*)

ZETUCUPAN

Rise from these meditations at your door,
Jesuphe, rise; and where the women grind
Corn and the rainbow and the swallow praise,
And earth, how fair, and snow upon the peaks
Afar from this our mesa rock, our sky
City, our Ácoma, go now and sing,
And grind. For when the Clan of Antelopes
Worn from Laguna come, bread freshly baked
Should be for serving. Meanwhile be the fires
Fed with the fragrant wood of pine, mesquit
Borne hither on our heads along the plain,
Up the defile, the ramp of sand, up to
The hand-holes in the craggy walls of rock
Here to this space of the low flying cloud;
And where the eagles would be nesting, save
Our houses here are builded, and were built
When the All Father dried the flood.

JESUPHE

And since
Toil, sorrow, war, injustice are our lot.

ZETUCUPAN

But to endure, from the desert silence learn
The lesson of still mouths whatever come,

And from the Father Sky the passive face
Of peace, or even smiles, that is the life
To live, as we have lived it; to live till death
Take us, or till the white man unappeased
With the land once ours, this rock with envious hands
Seizes. Then the lost eagles may return
To nest amid the ruins of our courts,
And break the silence with their cries, where now
Are songs and grinding, and mysterious rites
In the kiva, and girls' laughter to the moon
Hanging above the valley like a goat's
Horn with a taper in it.

JESUPHE

My father, I
Am very sorrowful.

ZETUCUPAN

Why are you sorrowful?

JESUPHE

I dreamed of Eagle Chief. I dreamed him dead,
I saw his wound.

ZETUCUPAN

Of the All Father dream,
Who thought into the mists till there was light,
And in the middle place stood as the Sun
Surrounded by his warriors. So was life
And death. So light was and the night.

And the light lived in the east. The light was peace,
Purity, friendship, holiness and joy.
The light befriended us, but blinded us,
Deceived us with its brightness when the east
Poured on our land the white man who appeared
First as a god of goodness. Even as drouth
Follows the light, till all the melons thirst,
And blades of corn droop down like broken spears,
So has the white man dried our rulership,
And taken our land for wealth of oil and gold.

JESUPHE

And brought Saint Joseph's picture here to rend
The peace of Ácoma, my peace and yours.

ZETUCUPAN

His cross too, for the cross from ancient days
Descending to us, save with desert flowers
Not blood we honored it, when Ácoma
To Alvarado's men, who tramped beside
Katzimo's wonder, seemed the pedestals
Of a ruined realm to their astonished eyes.
We had the cross here then, but as the sign
Of the morning and the evening stars, not lust,
Nor war, nor conquest, with no worship less
Than his, nor signs less lovelier than his;
Nor was our Montezuma less a friend
Than Jesus, saviour Montezuma, god
Who when Coyote achieved the Theft of Fire
For men, and by the several guarded doors

Where watched the Bear, the Cougar and the Snake
Passed with the Fire to us of Ácoma
First city and oldest of the world. Our god
Wandered away, or others say his heart
Out of the funeral pyre to heaven untouched
Of flame ascended, and as the morning star
Became a light forever.

JESUPHE

For him our cross
With feathered prayer sticks and with desert flowers
Was honored when the Spaniard on that ledge
Of yonder rock appeared with guns and swords
And slaughtered us, and with consuming fire
Burned Ácoma.

ZETUCUPAN

So has the story passed
From chief to chief along the centuries,
So is it written. But playing hope with hope
We watched the tree which Montezuma planted
Near Pecos. Thus the god said planting it:
"When the tree falls I shall return again
To Ácoma and lead its people hence
To happiness and power." With patience then,
Such as, my daughter, you must keep in heart
We watched the tree. Now do you patience keep,
Though anger of Laguna strike at us,
And peril come about the saint, with ills

Greater than this. Behold the fertile miles
Of valleys, and the pebbled wastes where oil
Slept like a serpent's eye under a ledge;
And the sandy streams, or hills with brows of rock
With gold bespangled, which became the spoil
Of multiplying whites! Among us came
Disease unknown before, and pestilence.
So that this air of Ácoma made pure
By winds and by the flaming of the Sun,
And souls of stars, though keeping still their strength
Of healing could not save us, and we died.
Yet we were patient. Yet with constant rites
To the plumed serpent, guardian of health
We sought release. And from this Ácoma
We saw the clouds, even as seasons drift
Down to this day, when once again the creed
Of Jesus troubles Ácoma, and Saint Joseph's
Picture which this church for its blessings loaned
Laguna first, and then Laguna stole
Makes war between the cities, needless war.
Yet I would punish such embroiling theft;
And had I seen the thief up clambering,
Or breaking at the church's door, his life
Had paid for it, indifferent as I am
Toward the picture, and without belief
In the saint's power to bless. Yet is he able
To stir up hate, and chiefly in youth's blood,
Such as the Clan of Antelopes, who would rouse
On any trifle, if Laguna came
Hidden by darkness, and robbed Ácoma,

Coming as did the Spaniard long ago
There by the needle cliff.

JESUPHE

The needle cliff!
What was that story?

ZETUCUPAN

Now your gazing eyes
Look past it, daughter. There was it long ago
Our watchman fell, by Spanish hatred slain
When first he came from Mexico, and the swift
Feet of fast runners brought from town to town
Word of his dread approach. No word had we
Of Laguna's thief! But then did Ácoma
Arm and with arrows and with stones and fire
Await the Spaniard. Many days went by,
And a night of rain and clouds garbed Ácoma
In darkness, and in darkness did the foe
Steal up the rocks and scale them, till at dawn
The watcher on the needle cliff surprised
Cried ho, with only time to sound the horn
Of imminent fear; then with his body block
The narrow way till help arrived, himself
Alone the foe opposing with shield and spear.
He held the pass, but fell a sacrifice
To Ácoma. For him are yonder ribbons
Tied to the needle cliff and ears of corn,
Yes, on this day of grief for Ácoma,
Seeing Laguna entered with no watch

To spy her stealth and guard the ancient pass.
It is most strange that this dishonoring time
Should celebrate the guard who did not fail.

JESUPHE

Whether we worship Those Above or Christ,
The cross adore, or supplicate the Sun
Our lives are crushed now, being caught between.

ZETUCUPAN

O, Sun that out of the dawning mist appears,
And climbs till in the midmost sky you look
Upon this valley, this city of the rock;
Great Mystery of the Sun who fathoms all
We worship, the thunder and the jagged fire,
And the serpent gliding as the lightning does;
The rainbow, earth too, water and the sky,
All that upon this weary, treacherous world
Brings to the children of the desert cross
Corn, tuna, wine of thistles — these we pray
For blessings, and with thanks of flutes and drums,
And fire and dances ask continuance
Of gifts of earth, of light, of ample life.

JESUPHE

So tangled, father by our divided prayers.

ZETUCUPAN

This strife now of the picture is the fruit
Of evil graffing.

JESUPHE

So it is I grieve.

ZETUCUPAN

Yes, they not reading in our rites and signs
Their deities, nor loving us who see
In Jesus and his foster sire, the saints,
And in his mother, the wisdom always ours,
Ours from the first for ages, slew our watch
There by the needle cliff to bring their god
Among us, and this church to raise. From thence
We die. Your brother may be fatal fruit
Of them. These first, and later, now the faiths
Other than Spain's oppressed and still oppress
Us, whether killing those who kill, or hands
Of friendship giving them. The white man fears;
He would be safe. And when Wovoka rose
Who taught the faith of work and righteousness,
And peace, and brought the dance whose dancers saw
Dead friends and visions of the spirit world,
The white man stayed the dances, lest the tribes
Caught up in spirit should burst in flames of war.

JESUPHE

So might our wrongs be tinder to such sparks.

ZETUCUPAN

But when did worship of the Father Sky,
The Mother Earth, the Sun engender hate,
Such as all Indians suffered by, to us

Was brought, and still is brought to wound or slay
Our freedom and its peace? We had enough
Of burdens, woes without these alien seeds
Sown on our Ácoma. Woes of our own
Sufficed without the angers of this hour
Which rage around Saint Joseph's picture stolen.

JESUPHE

And you, my father, ruler of Ácoma
What would you do if one of Ácoma
Had helped Laguna in this enterprise?

ZETUCUPAN

What do you say? Know you of such a one?

JESUPHE

No! But I wondered if a doubt was fixed
On any one.

ZETUCUPAN

No child of Ácoma
Would be so faithless. If it chanced to be
He would be banished from the city's gate,
As recreant to the Sun, whose love was poured
On us, and corn grew, rain fell, and the streams
Watered the fields before this picture came.
Wherefore to join Laguna in this theft
Pays over reverence to the saint, and feeds,
Though with a trivial thing, an ancient feud.
It should be cursed. And if your dream foretell

The death of Eagle Chief, I curse Laguna,
I curse the saint, and all who strove for him,
And all who in remotest way produced
This bitterness and blood.

JESUPHE

So do I mourn,
And wait and hope, and quell anxiety
With expectation of the Clan's arrival
In safety, and with Eagle Chief returned
Unharmed, and all this struggle for the saint
Ended and never again to be resumed;
With memory of it dwindled to a tale
About the fire, or made into a song
For the Clan of Antelopes to sing when dancing.
Would it could be, with every consequence
Clean wiped away. But till the Clan is back
I must reflect upon the dream: his eyes
Set and his body limp borne up the ramp
Here to this court as trophy of the Saint.

ZETUCUPAN

No, daughter. To the grinding women go,
And grind with them. These are but fears of girls.
We shall see Eagle Chief again. If not,
Endure. And with your father keep the board
Whereon the olden chieftains made a mark
For every passing year. Two hundred years
From chief to chief this board of memory
Has come, whereon each unsubmitting year

Received a scrawl of keel, to keep the count
Of our resistance. When the board is full
We will be Christians. Till the last mark made
We will adore the Sun, and sing the earth.
The chanting in the church has ceased. The mass
Is over. Father Martinez at the door
Pauses a moment. Now he opens! Go.
(*Exit Jesuphe.*)

Father Martinez and Zetucupan

FATHER MARTINEZ

Zetucupan, why not to early mass?

ZETUCUPAN

I lost the time while giving comfort here.

FATHER MARTINEZ

Comfort to whom? The saints are comforting.

ZETUCUPAN

Jesuphe grieves in fashion singular.

FATHER MARTINEZ

For what? It ill befits so young a heart.

ZETUCUPAN

About her brother Eagle Chief she grieves.

FATHER MARTINEZ

What has befallen him? Has he returned?

ZETUCUPAN

Last night she dreamed her brother with the dead.

FATHER MARTINEZ

So say you? And how dying? Tell me all.

ZETUCUPAN

While striving for the picture of the Saint.

FATHER MARTINEZ

Laguna clashed with Ácoma in arms?

ZETUCUPAN

She dreamed his wound, and I infer such strife.

FATHER MARTINEZ

And of this matter you have spoken here?

ZETUCUPAN

Father, Jesuphe is a woman ill.

FATHER MARTINEZ

What is her illness? Of what character?

ZETUCUPAN

She paled and sickened even while we talked.

FATHER MARTINEZ

And all for anxious thought of Eagle Chief?

ZETUCUPAN

If there be other things I do not know.

FATHER MARTINEZ

When once she sees the Saint she will be well.

ZETUCUPAN

When she beholds her brother she will sing.

FATHER MARTINEZ

The Saint has always blessed the women folk.

ZETUCUPAN

And for the Saint no blood should ever flow.

FATHER MARTINEZ

So did I counsel peaceful ways before.

ZETUCUPAN

Would that the Saint by lot had been returned.

FATHER MARTINEZ

I had no chance against these heady youths.

ZETUCUPAN

Great envy burns between the Indian towns.

FATHER MARTINEZ

Because the Saint brings crops and heals the sick.

ZETUCUPAN

Laguna blessed should give the picture back.

FATHER MARTINEZ

She did before when I devised the lots.

ZETUCUPAN

And now without such judgment shown of God.

FATHER MARTINEZ

The Saint is Ácoma's from the King of Spain.

ZETUCUPAN

Two centuries is Ácoma's as we know.

FATHER MARTINEZ

Now I have fears, though Ácoma get it back.

ZETUCUPAN

Losing its virtue for the people's sin?

FATHER MARTINEZ

I fear the Federal Soldiers may interfere.

ZETUCUPAN

And take the Saint away from Ácoma?

FATHER MARTINEZ

Here will they see your kiva and be stirred.

ZETUCUPAN

Perhaps our rituals to interdict?

FATHER MARTINEZ

Your dances and your worship of the Sun.

ZETUCUPAN

So long permitted by the Saint to us.

FATHER MARTINEZ

And suffered by the church and me its priest.

ZETUCUPAN

Would from this rock the Saint could bless both towns.

FATHER MARTINEZ

In peace adjusting this it might be so.

ZETUCUPAN

We can be happy with the Saint and Sun.

FATHER MARTINEZ

But Protestants would take them both away.

ZETUCUPAN

Long centuries have given us strength to bear.

FATHER MARTINEZ

More do I fear each day the Protestants
Who left our Holy Church for liberty
Of conscience, and now deny it each to each,
And you deny it, and for their tyranny
Assume such masks as abstinence from wine;
And arraying themselves with holier wills than ours,
And stirring up the dregs of prejudice
Extort new laws equipped with guns to force
Their social shibboleths upon the land.
These like a mist scarce seen out of the valley

Exhaling while unseen premonitive chill,
I feel. And ever when a strife descends
Among the Indian towns occasion comes
For them to raise the moral cry for laws,
And judges send, or troops. Of more concern
Is this than Eagle Chief, Jesuphe's sorrow.

ZETUCUPAN

Many the winds and rains on Ácoma
Have blown and beaten — yet the rock remains.
Enduring many woes the Indian people
Have lived in Ácoma. Children of the Sun
We shall not perish quickly, nor our loves
Die till we die to the last reverent heart
Looks upon beauty as the highest good.
Father, I am an ageing man, soon old;
The secrets of all crosses I have learned,
And lights, whether of candles or of stars,
And chiefly of the Sun, wherein your word
My word confirms of God within it dwelling.
So in the cloud, the rainbow, in living things,
Birds, cattle, sheep, in men of every skin
He moves and has His being, quickens them.
Hear! If disaster come to Ácoma,
And death take all of us, I should be blest
Dying with head upon a boulder propped
At the day's close, the sinking sun to see
Beautiful, and the Earth all beautiful,
Sustaining me till darkness took my eyes —

FATHER MARTINEZ

With prayers of intercession by the Saint.

ZETUCUPAN

Yes, if you came and thrust upon my breast
The cross, that would be well to signify
Redeeming blood, and suffering to redeem.
But if I pressed it close to me to mean
The morning star, how could you know or care?

FATHER MARTINEZ

Blessed and absolved, the rest belongs to God.
But I would see Jesuphe.

ZETUCUPAN

She's within . . .
What were those shouts? They sound as from below
The Rock, and distant.

FATHER MARTINEZ

Yes, I hear them now.
Are some awaiting there the Antelopes?

ZETUCUPAN

Most, save the grinding women and ourselves
Went down to wait and greet the Clan.

FATHER MARTINEZ

Let us
See what it is, Zetucupan. Come on.
(*Exeunt.*)

CORN GRINDING WOMEN

1

He-ya, Ha-ya, He-ya, Ha-ya,
See my lovely mountain high there,
See my mountain in the sky there!
He-ya, Ha-ya, He-ya, Ha-ya,
Hither comes the rain clouds bringing
Dew for desert blossoms springing
He-ya, Ha-ya, He-ya, Ha-ya,
Tall shall grow the youthful corn
With the rainbow heaven born.

2

Butterflies! Butterflies! Fly!
The upward swallows sing;
Hide down before you die;
Under the smoke-bush cling,
Blue and yellow of wing.
Away to the blossoms, butterflies,
Where the snake is guarding the brook;
Where the wife of old Sekala dies,
The thousand flower maguey,
By the hot wind stolen away,
When the pods of the loco shook.
Butterflies! Butterflies! Fly!
Hasten Red Wing! Hasten White Wing!
I-o-ho! I-o-ho!
Now the winds from the valley blow,
Now the falling rain drops sing.

3

Wonder water! Cooling rain!
The corn ear on the topmost tip
Is praying for your drops to drip
On the hill-sides, on the plain,
Till the floods in the waterchutes
Flow about the thirsty roots.
We would live long, and live again
Says the corn ear to the rain.
Let us live, too, glad and strong
We who sing the grinding song.

4

Hi, yai, Hi, yai, everywhere
The world is freshened, sweet and fair.
Hi, yai, see the rainbow there!
Hitherward, Hitherward, the swallow cries,
Hitherward bring the rainy skies
Over the melons where the hard
Earth is sun-baked, hitherward!
Where the smitten corn blades lift
Whispers, Hitherward! Hitherward! Swift!

5

The corn is shouting, We awake,
We grow, and bless the Lightning Snake.
I-o-ho, the water wonder.
Hi, yai, rainbow, wind and thunder!
He-ya, Ha-ya, He-ya, Ha-ya,

See my lovely mountains high there,
See my mountain in the sky there!

6

Now are Sky, the father, Earth, the mother
Met and wedded, joining one another,
Helpmates ever, just and dutiful,
Loving, serving, all is beautiful.
Now the white corn wedded with the golden,
Helpmates ever from the ages olden,
All is beautiful with Earth maternal,
And with Father Sky, the good eternal.
Life forever, happiness unending,
Helpmates ever, loving and befriending
Children of the corn land everywhere,
All the world is beautiful and fair.

(*Enter a Koshare.*)

KOSHARE

When the dawn was cool and white,
With these corn-husks in my hair,
Striped to symbol day and night
I did with these berries fare,
Round and round the kiva's square.
All these courts along the rock
I did visit, knock and knock,
Rousing folk to disencumber
Lazy eyes from dreams and slumber.
Then I saw Jesuphe stealing
Like a ghost from place to place;

Lifting up her hands and reeling,
Sorrow written on her face.
I will pry her secret out;
I will taunt her, mock and tease,
Finding what she grieves about.
For her father saying she's
Worried over Eagle Chief
Fools himself with that belief.

(*Enter Father Martinez and Zetucupan.*)

Father Martinez, Zetucupan, Koshare

FATHER MARTINEZ

How far across this valley in this air
Approaching men may be descried. My eyes
Yet are too old to see what men they be.

ZETUCUPAN

And mine. I cannot even count them. You
Of roguish tricks and prying eyes, what men
Come here to Ácoma?

KOSHARE

The Antelopes.

ZETUCUPAN

Bearing the picture?

KOSHARE

With the picture borne
By one who walks ahead. The others dance
Around him.

ZETUCUPAN

Who is bearing and who dance?

KOSHARE

All who rejoice are dancing.

ZETUCUPAN

Do not mock!
How many? Count them.

KOSHARE

There are more who come
Than went away.

ZETUCUPAN

How would Laguna send
Men with the picture?

KOSHARE

Travelers, perhaps,
To Ácoma have joined them on the way.

ZETUCUPAN

You cannot see among them Eagle Chief?

KOSHARE

And if I did, is he so great a son?

ZETUCUPAN

He is my son.

KOSHARE

And for your daughter's dream
You have anxiety.

ZETUCUPAN

Ruling Ácoma
I pray for peace, and for my son's return.

KOSHARE

Your daughter does not grieve for Eagle Chief.

ZETUCUPAN

Why say you so?

KOSHARE

What fire of sister love
Watered has ever given forth such smoke?

ZETUCUPAN

What love then? You must speak. Be plain with me.

KOSHARE

What I divine you shall behold in time.
(*Enter Jesuphe.*)

JESUPHE

You trifle with my father; your mind disclose!

KOSHARE

Woman, whose eyes should not be lifted up
To gaze on me, you stare upon my stripes,

And hair with corn-husks, but with sorrowed eyes,
Not glad, nor seeing in me the beloved dead
Come back to earth, the embodiment I am.
Some death afflicts you, or some death is feared —
Whose I shall fathom. For you do not grieve
The picture's loss so much. If for it grieving
Now that they bring it hither why no smiles?
No, you hide something. When the dawn came up,
And rose the sun above the distant peaks,
Making my rounds I saw you in the court,
Forlorn about the mills. And I who come
To celebrate the Ancients of the world,
Who sought in life the Middle Place and corn
Before the Flood had died — yet comfort found,
Though no corn grew, for spirits of the dead
Returning as Makers of Delight with proof
Of the corn to be to feed men all their years —
I coming so, with laughter hailed and shouts,
As custom is, from you had silence, stares.
So now to probe your heart! With rabbit skins
Wherein our dead were buried anciently,
And with these night-shade berries, and this sprig
Of spruce, as symbol of eternal life,
And wisdom, I will fetch from out your eyes
What hides behind them; and all Ácoma
Shall know for sport today, while we rejoice
Over Saint Joseph's picture safely hung
Once more above the altar.

(*Exit Jesuphe.*)

So she hides!
I will go in and plague her till she speak.
(*Exit.*)

ZETUCUPAN

Fear takes me.

FATHER MARTINEZ

Quiet at confessional,
Perhaps she would unburden all her heart.
Wait! The Koshare should not solely hear
What he elicits. I shall follow them,
And audit what he draws. Those nearer shouts —

ZETUCUPAN

At the rock's foot, below the ramp of sand.

FATHER MARTINEZ

I will return here when Saint Joseph comes.
(*Exit.*)

ZETUCUPAN

What now? What golden eagle flying the heights
Of Ácoma these lustrous feathers shed,
One fallen at my feet, some still in air?
I saw no wings, no shadow, and no cry
Disturbed this silence, delicate as the moon's
Amid the pine trees when no zephyr moves.
Ho! Eagle Chief! Are you alive and safe?
(*Exit.*)

Ácoma

SUN PRIEST

I

House of the Dawn! And of the evening Light,
And of the cloud, and of the mist, the rain,
Heaven! And Spirit mysterious, be this rite
Acceptable, who in the Sun again
Rejoices Ácoma! Soul! Sacred Fire,
Which our first fathers, waked by earliest birds,
Emerging from their caves were as a choir
Made dumb for musing music, with no words,
And stood adoring. Then silently descended
From cliffs of sleep to fields, or cropping herds
Of goats along the hills, until was ended
Their labor, and you sank behind the scroll
Of the overshadowing peak. Until was gone
The upward streaming glory to the shoal
Of darkness, where the evening star had drawn
The moth wings of the night — as from a bowl
Of fiery coals a widening glow is sent,
Wherein a silver beetle of irised wing
Suspends itself. Take now our offering,
O Sun, who over heaven spreads the tent
Of clouds and scatters them; and with the snake
Of flame sends rain. With music's instrument,
With dancing steps, and songs, and with the shake
Of rattles, and with leaves of cottonwood
Do we bring worship and incessant song
For earth's fertility, and our daily good,
And for our bodies, beautiful and strong.

2

Come white dawn youths out of you, rising Sun,
With wild verbenas,
With meadow foam, and larkspur; where you run
Fling white azaleas;
Strew ghost flowers for the stars, and whispering bells
Where the lonely hill is;
And heap the heights with thistles, and the dells
With desert lilies:
These for the light, O Sun, which on the rim
Of the mountain quivers,
As milk weeds shiver where the swallows skim
The silver rivers.
Come yellow dawn youths of the Sun, with hands
Of trumpet clustered,
Mescal and desert mallow bound with strands
Of golden mustard.
Tree poppies, phlox and tulips as the light
Grows red from opal;
Pour on the paleness which has slain the night
Lupine and nopal.
O, Sun adored, and Those Above, who draw,
And long have drawn you,
Sire of the thunder, lightning, and our Awe
The plumed Awanyu,
Health give us, that we may adore you still
With rapt adoring,
With flutes and drums and dances and a will
That serves imploring.

Spire up the smoke bush of the sky, the gift
Of the sea's scions,
Clouds, as the ocotillo when they drift
With dandelions.

3

Forth from the kiva's floor
Our feet restore,
Our hands restore;
And by the laddered entrance
On us pour
Light for the mind, and grain
Of healing, more and more.
Lead us the way to walk
In joy and free of pain,
With songs and happy talk
Lead us to walk
Amid abundant rain.
Silent as flees the hawk,
Silent as feet in pollen by the stream
Pass between stalk and stalk
Of tulips, be our dream
Peace and no brother's harm.
May hate and lust disarm.
Send us the moon, your sister, when
The laughing children sport,
And race among the counsels of old men
In the silvered court.
May life be beautiful above us,
And life be beautiful below us;

May you, O Sun, still love us;
And may your splendor show us
The pathway undiminished.
Beauty, O Sun, bestow us,
With beauty be life finished;
Our hearts restore and keep;
Hold death delayed and far;
And lead us out of sleep
As night the star.
I have prayed, O Sun, to bless
Our Ácoma and redress
Our life with loveliness.

(*Exit. Enter the Clan of Antelopes bearing the picture of Saint Joseph; Eagle Chief; after them Father Martinez.*)

Father Martinez, Eagle Chief, Clan of Antelopes

FATHER MARTINEZ

Kneel all! Have mercy on us, Lord!
Have mercy, Christ! Have mercy, God the Son,
And God the Holy Ghost; and God the Holy
Trinity, have mercy! Pray for us
O Holy Mary!
Light of patriarchs,
Scion of David, spouse of Mary, mother
Of God, O, Holy Joseph! Foster Sire
Of God's son, and defender of the Christ;
Chaste guardian of virgins; Holy Head
Of the Holy Family, most prudent, just,

Faithful and valiant and obedient;
Pillar of families, and of laborers
The lover, and the solace of the sick,
And hope of dying men; the ornament
Of patience, terror of demons, pray for us!
O, God, who as the spouse of Thy Most Holy
Mother didst deign to choose the blessed Joseph
As spouse of her, we pray that Thou wilt grant
Him whom we venerate as our protector
On earth, to be our friend in Heaven too,
Our intercessor. Grant it Thou who livest
World without end and reignest. Amen.

CHORUS OF INDIANS

Amen!

FATHER MARTINEZ

Take now the picture to the church, above
The altar hang it where it was before.

EAGLE CHIEF

Father, I ask a private word with you.

FATHER MARTINEZ

Go take the picture!

(*Exeunt the Clan.*)

What is it now, my son?
Speak, Eagle Chief!

EAGLE CHIEF

First in order to tell
What happened. With the white dawn we arrived,

And at the entrance to Laguna paused
Below the little steep where is the gate.
There in low tones we planned the strategy:
How some should stand and watch the church's door,
And some should enter. And what force should be
Were we attacked. All this we thought about,
And vowed no blow to strike save being struck
First to defend ourselves we were compelled.
So much did we respect the Holy Saint.
Yet even so we hoped to enter in,
And leave unseen. It happened otherwise.
I being picked, as the king's son, no doubt,
To fetch the picture forth, and bear it here
Leading the Clan, climbed with those following
The steep, and stepping to the door took hold
Of the knob and tried it. Obstacle was now,
The door was locked. I forced it with the help
Of others, quietly; and I entered then,
And in the darkness saw Saint Joseph's face,
With a nimbus like the moon — a miracle,
And omen fair, and welcome. Quick I took
The picture from the altar, ran and reached
The door — and there Laguna's sexton stood,
The keeper of the key, with others stood
Men of Laguna, led by Thunder Bird.
They heard us and had come. I being the head
Of great offense, bearing the picture became
The mark of fury, and was set upon
By all, with whom the Clan of Antelopes
Engaged defending. There with shouts and stones,

Confusion followed, and we fought and fell.
Struck down myself, but never losing hold
Of the Saint, I rose, and through a clutch of hands
Hastened when of a sudden Thunder Bird
Fired, aiming me. A miracle alone
Sent wide the bullet, and my life preserved.
Unwounded but defending then I fired,
And Thunder Bird dropped hands, and toppled, shook,
And sank.

FATHER MARTINEZ

Dead do you say?

EAGLE CHIEF

Yes, in a moment dead.
But falling spoke some words.

FATHER MARTINEZ

What did he say?

EAGLE CHIEF

We do not know. Jesuphe's name he spoke,
No more is known. So hither we hastened then.

FATHER MARTINEZ

May God forgive you.

EAGLE CHIEF

Even if He forgive,
I fear the consequences. For still remains

The question of our wrong, breaking the door,
And entering, and taking in our hands
The law so. And the courts may seize upon
This business, and with punishment of me
Teach Ácoma and Laguna not to strive,
Even concerning saints. And there's my father,
Ruler of Ácoma. What consequence
Might touch him for my act? Who might not say
He acted as accomplice of my work,
And sent me to Laguna? Had you seen
His look when he beheld me coming now,
How glad! How eagerly he flung his arms
About me! But confiding to him this
With hurried words, that he might be prepared
What fallen eyes were his, what slipping off
Of nerveless arms! What reeling to his house
To think or hide, or grieve alone, or plan
Escape for me, or how to reach the heart
Of this lieutenant who came here with us —
My mind is made.

FATHER MARTINEZ

To run away?

EAGLE CHIEF

Not that,
But to depart, and you can speed my way.
If I have served you, or the Holy Church,
Father, you now can specially serve the Nation
Assisting me.

FATHER MARTINEZ

What? Tell me!

EAGLE CHIEF

There is war,
World wide and monstrous war has taken us,
Has flamed America.

FATHER MARTINEZ

Has flamed America?

EAGLE CHIEF

Across the plain an army officer
There near Katzimo riding overtook
Our slower pace. He told us. Germany
Engulfs the world now — and America
Needs every man, needs us, and I would fight
For little nations everywhere as we
Of Ácoma are little.

FATHER MARTINEZ

So to war!

EAGLE CHIEF

If I can solve this death of Thunder Bird,
And be accepted.

FATHER MARTINEZ

This officer then has heard?

EAGLE CHIEF

Has heard; and taken the Clan of Antelopes,
He's in the house now of the governor
Enlisting them; but me he puts aside
Till I am freed somehow at Santa Fé,
Sponsored by you, avouched for. This I beg
That you will thus befriend me.

FATHER MARTINEZ

I will go,
And win him for you. It is only just.
Wait here. I have some questions still to ask
Jesuphe. She is coming. Keep her here.
(*Exit. Enter Jesuphe and the Koshare.*)

Jesuphe, Eagle Chief, Koshare

JESUPHE

O, my dread brother with such bloody hands!
I overheard what you have just confessed.

KOSHARE

She loved this Thunder Bird.

EAGLE CHIEF

Away with you!

KOSHARE

She loved him. And the Saint returned, awakes
No praise in her, no thanks, nor even smiles;
But all her soul is grief for Thunder Bird.

EAGLE CHIEF

Let it be so. Go now and let us be.

KOSHARE

But not for Thunder Bird alone she mourns,
Is tortured. But her tears are drops of rain
On tips of grass by which a serpent's eye
Sparkles and seems the same as innocent dew.
She answered me and Father Martinez
With forked words. Some secret she conceals.

EAGLE CHIEF

Be gone, I say.

KOSHARE

I laugh, and laughing return.
(*Exit.*)

JESUPHE

Behold my broken spirit! Look and see!

EAGLE CHIEF

Yes, do I see.

JESUPHE

My fallen hair, my tears likewise behold.

EAGLE CHIEF

These I behold.

JESUPHE

Killing my love you wrought as well my woe.

EAGLE CHIEF

How could I know?

JESUPHE

Oh! But this blood for paint upon some cloth!

EAGLE CHIEF

And why not wroth
Jesuphe, you, for pride in Ácoma?

JESUPHE

Why do you look so? Ah!

EAGLE CHIEF

Your love for Thunder Bird was satisfied!

JESUPHE

His promised bride.

EAGLE CHIEF

But all the time you kept the secret close.

JESUPHE

Our tribes were foes.

EAGLE CHIEF

You met him somewhere — met him secretly.

JESUPHE

That had to be.

EAGLE CHIEF

While Ácoma was sleeping. That was false.

JESUPHE

Love so enthralls.

EAGLE CHIEF

Where was your trysting place? Your mind unlock.

JESUPHE

By the needle rock.

EAGLE CHIEF

The pass where anciently our hero bled?

JESUPHE

Below instead.

EAGLE CHIEF

There where the Spanish treachery broke in
Was done your sin.

JESUPHE

What sin? Make your accusal swift and clear.

EAGLE CHIEF

Laguna here
Entered. So times their story but repeat.

JESUPHE

How then to meet?

EAGLE CHIEF

And on these nights no thief did you espy?

JÈSUPHE

No thief espy?

EAGLE CHIEF

This Thunder Bird the picture stole, or else
Wrought on you spells;
And while you slumbered some confederate
The signal did await
To steal from darkness and the picture take.

JESUPHE

Oh, for Saint Joseph's sake,
Such emptiness of good, such sorrow, strife,
Such waste of life!

EAGLE CHIEF

What is your secret? Did this Thunder Bird
Do this? Your plainest word.

JESUPHE

My brother, spare me. For my brain is wild,
Within me stirs the child,
Its father dead. Have I not paid enough
For any witless love,
If such it be? Who knows? For Those Above
Let us walk blind; the Saint
Is nothing but some worthless cloth and paint.

EAGLE CHIEF

Yes, but our own, as even our silver rings,
Or bowls, or water springs.
These being seized would lead to force and blood.
If silently you stood
While Thunder Bird himself, or by a plot
The picture stole, your lot
Awakes no pity in my breast. But if
Passing the needle cliff
You two, while in this City of the Sky
Sleep blinded every eye
Crept past the yard of many and ancient graves,
And the sacred caves
Faithless to Ácoma, and achieved this theft,
Justly are you bereft
Of lover, and justly are guilty brands
Burned on you, on your hands
His blood. Thus in such case I put the blame
For blood, for what can maim
My peace and liberty. Your silence keep,
Your secret still beweep,
I know a way to change my life afar:
It is in war;
And to the war I go to fight and free
For great democracy
The world. You being, as I think, the cause
Of the broken laws,
If I have broken them, which you broke first,
Sit here accursed.

I little as you upon the Saint believe,
But scorn to thieve
Against my city, or even have for friends
Any who make ends
Of keeping what was stolen intended death.

JESUPHE

Such bitter breath!

EAGLE CHIEF

Yes bitter! But here comes the soldier man,
Here come the Clan.

(*Enter the lieutenant and Father Martinez, followed by the Clan of Antelopes.*)

LIEUTENANT

You are the Eagle Chief, who this Thunder Bird
Killed at Laguna?

EAGLE CHIEF

I am Eagle Chief.

LIEUTENANT

Unversed in law I am not clear in mind
What course were rightful to retrieve the Saint:
Whether the matter to the Courts belonged;
Or whether you might, taking steps yourselves,
Go to Laguna, and by proper force
Take what was yours. That it was Ácoma's
There is no question. So Father Martinez
Assures me, and that Charles the Second gave

The Saint to Ácoma these two hundred years.
This being truth, and being the truth as well
That someone from Laguna — or for her
In stealth the picture took, was it the law
For you as leader of the Clan to force
Laguna's church? I need a lawyer's mind.
Then being intercepted at such work,
And set upon, was it defense of self
Unmixed of other things, to meet with guns
Laguna's guns? This puzzles me no less.
Yet in my judgment I side with Eagle Chief,
And hold him guiltless; while the Antelopes
Who did no wrong, unless it be a wrong
One's own to seize, seem clearly in the right.
So I have sworn them, made them soldiers in
The war for God and freedom of the Seas.
So will I swear you Eagle Chief. But if
The Court at Santa Fé adjudges crime
Upon you, then your oath and service sponged
By me you stay to answer to the law.
Having regard for this I ask you now,
Is it your pleasure, out of freest will
To join the army?

EAGLE CHIEF

Of my freest will.

LIEUTENANT

Your mark make, or your thumb print to the oath,
And so enlist.

EAGLE CHIEF

With thumb print and a cross
I go to war.

LIEUTENANT

So have the Antelopes
Become the soldiers of the great crusade.
Myself and Father Martinez will plead
At Santa Fé for Eagle Chief to free
His hands for war.

FATHER MARTINEZ

I think it may be done,
Nor shall we fail. For often have I solved
Much greater evils.

LIEUTENANT

Well, then be it so!
You Antelopes, you men of Ácoma,
A ruthless, brutal despot plotting rule
Of all the world, whereby your tribe and city
Would fall to him, upon America
Has trained his wrath. Already are embroiled
France, England, Russia, even far Japan
With slitted eyes of battleships keeps watch
For German craft, and lust to reparate
Has seized Shantung. With all the world afire,
And Europe but one camp of arms, where men
By thousands perish, killed by creeping gas,
Or from the sky slain, or by guns, no less

The Great White Chief forgiving to the last
The studied wrongs of Germany hoped in vain
To save America from war. But patience
Invited insult; and the reckless German
Emperor has sneered America
Though kicked to battle is too weak to fight.
We answer now the sneer. Insanity
Sees otherwise at last. His submarines
Flocking the underwaters bloody and swift
As sharks, still over patient protests struck
Our shipping, until now they strike no more;
We end them. War has been declared to end
Them, and the cowardice which fights
With hidden weapons. Clan of the Antelopes!
Swift men and brave, I take you to the war
As comrades, equals, being such for arms
Borne in the common cause against the might
Ancient, against autocracy and lust.
You first Americans, you from Ácoma,
The City of the Sky, where even before
Columbus touched San Salvador your fathers
Lived, worshipped, labored, kept the promised word,
Do you now fight to justify the land
Yours first, now ours together, the republic
Over us all; and to establish the sea
In its freedom to us; and for the rights of all
Small nations, for your own as small, but free
Through God to choose your counsels. In this war
You men of Ácoma are privileged
To share, proud benefaction. And your task

Performed in duty you will come again
To Ácoma with joy, with faces new
Lighted, and with hearts of deeper love
For that democracy which prospers you,
And us, and fills America with strength,
Wealth, freedom, and the liberal gifts of God.
Yet if upon the field the glorious death
Of a soldier take you, and this lofty Rock
See you no more, be this your monument,
Which looks upon the mountains and by them
Is gazed upon across these desert miles;
Be this your stone of memory to preserve
Your love while lasts the Rock.
A moment yet
Before we leave. Your dance and chant of war
Now celebrate. But do it quickly. Come!

CLAN OF ANTELOPES

Flint heart, flint youth, I go —
I-o-ho!
Flint god am I of Ácoma —
E-na!
Dawn star, flint star, pure —
Endure;
Wed the eve star, sleep
Bridal sleep.

Dawn star's hue and glint,
Storm cloud's thunder tint,
With the lightning's print,

My heart is strong, is flint.
I am the flint god, I am the flint youth,
I am the knife, the serpent's tooth.
Cactus, thorns I overcome;
I am the rattle, the battle drum,
The victor over evil things,
God of rain, the desert springs.
E-na! Ya-e! The war,
I am the morning star,
I am war!
Lightning I flash
On evil charms, and lash
Wither and maim;
Darkness, the thunder crash
Race me with flame —
Flint is my name.
Living forevermore
By every river shore,
Feared evermore
I hurl the foe to the ground
With fire, with death surround;
I slay, I wound;
Swift from the bow I bound
With a hissing sound
E-na!
I am the flint god, I am the flint youth;
I am the knife, the serpent tooth;
Flint god, flint youth, I-o-ho!
Kill the foe!

Dawn Star wed the Evening Star
When the storm has gone afar;
When the air is clear and mild
Then for covering of the child
Let the Dawn Star take the spear
To slay the wild cat, mountain deer;
And with speckled skin and fawn
Cradle peace, the child of Dawn.
Corn in plenty then will be;
People will be just and free —
Look! The rainbow!
I-o-ho!
I-o-ho!
Montezuma now I see —
I-o-ho!

FATHER MARTINEZ

O saving Victor open wide
The gates of heaven to man below,
Thou living, who didst die.
Our foes press on from every side,
Thine aid supply,
Thy strength bestow.
Be thine the endless praise
Immortal Godhead, One in Three.
Oh, grant us endless length of days
In our Native Land with Thee.
(*Enter Zetucupan.*)

ZETUCUPAN

My son, farewell. Of many evil things
Are you the victim, which on Ácoma
Fall too. May Those Above attend
Your steps.

EAGLE CHIEF

Father, farewell. And you, my sister —
What shall I say? May all be ordered wisely,
And every clay's strand make the final cup
Just, beautiful.

JESUPHE

O Eagle Chief, my brother!
(*Exeunt Eagle Chief, the Clan of Antelopes and the lieutenant.*)

FATHER MARTINEZ

Jesuphe! To confessional! Some secret,
Some Monster Viper fixes your regard.
First for the sin of bridal joys indulged
Before the marriage, sorrow and earnest prayer
Must cleanse you, and assuage the cruel wounds
Done to the Holy Mother's sacred heart.
And if beside there be some other thing,
Some dread that moved the lips of Thunder Bird
To speak your name and ask forgiveness
For you, there in the moment of sudden death —
For so it is reported — that confess.

What was it? For I think the carnal sin
To you and him as innocent as a kiss
Could not torment him dying. But so far
Has God's fear, Saint's fear, and the Church's fear
Won Ácoma, and in the toughest hearts
Found entrance, that if you and Thunder Bird
Took from the altar the picture of the Saint
That would affright him facing what was death
As consequence. Come to confessional!
(*Exit.*)

Zetucupan, Jesuphe

ZETUCUPAN

When may the Monster Viper's mouth be fed?

JESUPHE

My child shall never feed his cruel teeth.

ZETUCUPAN

Once he was soothed by seven wombs a year.

JESUPHE

I being your daughter you would save me that.

ZETUCUPAN

You being my daughter have afflicted me.

JESUPHE

But I can fly as that Taos woman did.

ZETUCUPAN

You shall be banished having renounced the Sun.

JESUPHE

How have I ever wholly taken Christ?

ZETUCUPAN

Trouble you brought on Ácoma for his Saint.

JESUPHE

My hands are innocent of this you speak.

ZETUCUPAN

Did you not steal Saint Joseph's picture? Speak!

JESUPHE

The church would banish me if I confessed.

ZETUCUPAN

Yes, truly; banished by Father Martinez.

JESUPHE

Between the Sun and Christ my life is caught.

ZETUCUPAN

Seeking dishonestly to honor both.

JESUPHE

What could I do, gods forced upon us so?

ZETUCUPAN

Hope still for Montezuma, serve the Sun.

JESUPHE

Here in our conquered city I have tried.

ZETUCUPAN

Stealing the Saint you have betrayed the Sun.

JESUPHE

The White Man's hands, are they exempt from stain?

ZETUCUPAN

I curse his gods because he took our lands.

JESUPHE

He broke our freedom, slaved our little state.

ZETUCUPAN

Now Eagle Chief has gone to fight for him.

JESUPHE

But not for liberty, but greater wrong.

ZETUCUPAN

So for his gods we should not broil ourselves.

JESUPHE

Love is a god stronger than any god.

ZETUCUPAN

For love of Thunder Bird you stole the Saint?

JESUPHE

Love is a god who dwells within the Sun.

ZETUCUPAN

Where war dwells, too, but war to serve our own.

JESUPHE

This war in Europe, what is it to us?

ZETUCUPAN

Nothing. And you sent Eagle Chief to war.

JESUPHE

How? I am breaking under bitter words.

ZETUCUPAN

He went to war to fly his idiot crime.

JESUPHE

I did not counsel death of Thunder Bird.

ZETUCUPAN

Yet mixing rituals you have betrayed
Ácoma and its peace, and following this
The White Man's war encircles Ácoma
And takes my Eagle Chief! O, wretched girl!

JESUPHE

Father, my grief is more than I can bear.

ZETUCUPAN

Look you! Laguna for these many years
Has hated Ácoma. Do you when choosing
A lover think of this? A lover, yes,
A lover, not a husband. Nor did he
Plan marriage with you. Never did he bring
Acceptable gifts to me, nor gifts at all;
Nor did he dream in Ácoma to live,
First in your home, as ancient custom bids
Beginning married life. Hidden were all
Your meetings, from your father hidden this
Love as you call it, giving me never a chance
To take him by adoption for a son.
Look you again! Could he your husband be
At peace in Ácoma, a trusted heart,
Beloved, admitted to our counsels, sent
For worship to our kiva, given bread
To break with us, after the secret slipped,
As it would at last, about the stolen Saint?
What if I care not, and as little you care
About the Saint, it was and is the stuff
To feed the rivalry of these cities, make
A cause of strife? And you, what did you think?

JESUPHE

I did as he commanded, loving him.

ZETUCUPAN

Thereafter to have married him all vain
In Ácoma your life, impossible;

Nor shall you live here now. Nor burial
Be here for you. Nor rites of water jars
Heaped on your mound, nor potsherds, if you die
In giving birth. But for an unmarried mother
Your mother killing a sheep shall sell its pelt;
And brewing cedar twigs, and wafer bread
Baking shall drink and eat to celebrate
The after-vomit of unwedded birth.
Hence when the Monster Viper has been fed,
Quit Ácoma, and never here return.
(*Exit.*)

JESUPHE

By this unfriendly doorway crouching low
With courage failing,
My heart is quailing.
O, Sun, look on me! Now is every woe
My life assailing,
Whose hope is failing.

Now I have memory of the moon-lit nights
When love immured me,
And shades obscured me;
And when with kisses and with mad delights
His words assured me,
His flute allured me.

Below the needle cliff when stealing down
For his embraces
In piney places,

With never a fear I left the garrulous town,
The singing spaces,
The happy faces.

Now sounds of flutes afar the snowy cloud
Seek to awaken.
But I, forsaken,
Tremble to hear, and as a reed is bowed
By a zephyr taken
My heart is shaken.

Did he to win the picture of the Saint
So call and woo me?
The sword goes through me,
Mother, the spouse of Joseph, and I faint —
'Twas love that drew me —
My brother slew me,

Slaying my love. My brain no longer heeds,
Nor truth discovers;
And as the plover's
Bewildered wing flutters the rattle weeds,
My vision hovers —
Woe to all lovers,

And woe to me, feeling the child that stirs.
O, Sun! O, Splendid,
Uncomprehended
God of the Sky. And glory, even hers,
Mary's, behold me ended,
Alone, unfriended.

Where shall I turn now? To the Mystic Snake,
By cistern or river,
Death and life giver,
And fang of sacrifice for hearts that ache—
Do you forever
My pain deliver.
(*Enter the Koshare.*)

KOSHARE

Still here? Will you or can't you
At the altar of the Santu
Lay baby shapes of clay,
To bring the child into the world,
And devils drive away?
Where are the bracelets, finger rings,
The images of bird and bear,
Coyote and the snake that stings,
And wingèd sticks for prayer?
Medicine Man! Is he at hand
To lift it to the dawning skies,
And hold it to the Sun god's eyes
That bless the mesa land?
Have you prepared the ear of corn
For symbol lying by your side,
And luck, too, when a child is born
That a mother doesn't hide?
And where's the ashes to define
Upon its body the cross's sign,
To make the witches squeal?

JESUPHE

Messiah Montezuma! Come! Behold!
Our sorrows manifold!

(*Exit.*)

KOSHARE

She leaves in mystery, half in wrath;
I'll follow after, spy and see
Whither she goes, and by what path.

(*Exit.*)

CORN GRINDING WOMEN

Wonder water! Cooling rain!
The corn ear on the top-most tip
Is praying for your drops to drip
On the hillside, on the plain,
Till the floods in the water chutes
Flow about the thirsty roots.
We would live long, he-ya, long,
We who sing the grinding song.
As the corn springs, so again
We would live, we would live,
We would live, too, glad and strong.
See my lovely mountain high there!
See my mountain in the sky there!
He-ya, Ha-ya, He-ya, Ha-ya,
Ha-ya, He-ya, Ha-ya, He-ya!

(*Enter Zetucupan.*)

ZETUCUPAN

Why to my mind now comes the ancient tale
Of the pigeons at Hanishoku in the vale,
The ruin now of a city at the base
Of Ácoma, home of a vanished race?
The fable from father to son
Has passed of the pigeons lending
Wings to Coyote, his ascent thus befriending
Along the steeps, until the top was won,
And the water hole of the Monster Viper, where
Taking their wings back he was left to cry
To the spider, saying, Spin a web to bear
Your basket lest I die,
And let me down from Ácoma. Then replied
The spider, I have spun and tied
The basket with my thread;
Descend now, but look down
Not up. But what the spider said
Coyote heard not, looked up, and so fell
For the broken spell.
So lay he with bloody body still and dead—
Why to my mind this ancient story with
Fears thronging round the myth?

(*Enter Koshare.*)

KOSHARE

Come! See!

ZETUCUPAN

What do you say now? Speak!

KOSHARE

Jesuphe there below in Hanishoku.

ZETUCUPAN

How there?

KOSHARE

From Ácoma leaping down.
I followed her to the cistern pool, behind
Lurking and watching. Coming to the pool,
There where the rattlers for the dance are caged,
She lifted up the covering rock, and seized
The hugest, fiercest. Quick as lightning is
It struck her breast. Then as I ran to her
She dropped the rattler; and racing to the edge
That looks on Hanishoku, flinging arms
She leaped. I hurried to the dizzy gulf,
Looked down. She sailed; she fluttered as a hawk
Quick turning its course, a wild and cloudy mass.
Then with no sound up from that awful depth
Her body struck and lay. I looked, I stared
Till my eyes blurred her with the mustard stalks.

ZETUCUPAN

Go! Carry her up.

(*Exit Koshare.*)

ZETUCUPAN

They have taken our lands, with fraud
They have lifted their God

For our worship enforced, for tribute out of our sweat;
Their tyrannous numbers beget
Ever the greater debt,
Ever our submission with a heavier rod.
Old age is on me, and greater loneliness,
And pain and friendlessness.
O Sun, conduct me to the mountainside,
There dying like a wolf upon
A sunny rock, withdrawn
From troubled Ácoma, then let me glide
As a shadow under the stone,
And sleep there lost, unknown,
Through endless time alone.

The End

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